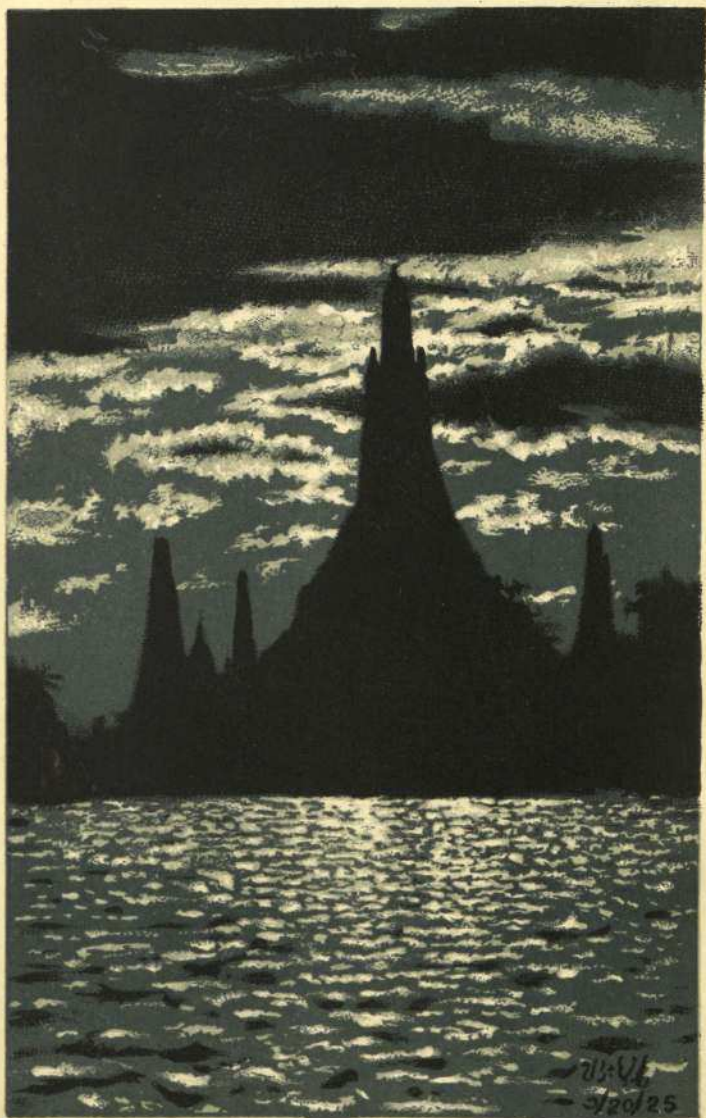


BANGKOK
SIAM

Royal State Railways of Siam.





GUIDE
TO
BANGKOK
WITH
NOTES ON SIAM

BY
MAJOR ERIK SEIDENFADEN

M. R. A. S., M. S. A.

(Late of His Siamese Majesty's Provincial Gendarmerie.)

Over 250 Illustrations

THIRD EDITION

1932.



Published by
THE ROYAL STATE RAILWAYS OF
SIAM.

Preface

A certain amount of courage is needed to bring out a guide book, lest the reader may not be satisfied with the information given therein, either because it is too meagre or because changes may have taken place, so that inaccuracies creep in for which the publishers are always liable to criticism. Nevertheless we feel that short and concise information is very much needed for the growing number of tourists who visit the City of Bangkok ; hence we have asked Major Erik Seidenfaden, a resident in this country for a long time past and a real lover of Siam and things Siamese, to guide you through the most fascinating City of Palaces and Temples of Oriental splendour in this hitherto little known corner of Asia.

*The Administration of the
Royal State Railways of Siam.*

Decorations and half tone illustrations
executed by
the Arts and Crafts School
Bangkok

Printed by the Bangkok Times Press Ltd.

THIRD EDITION.

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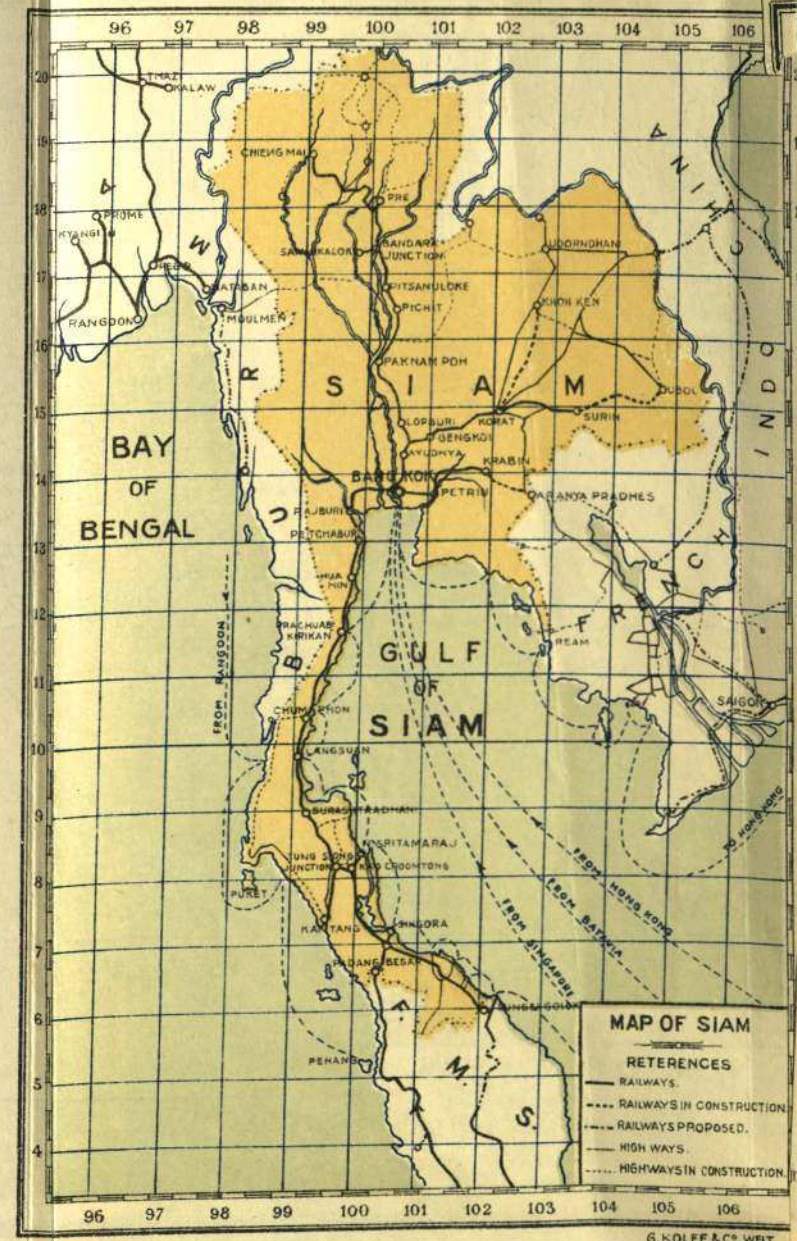
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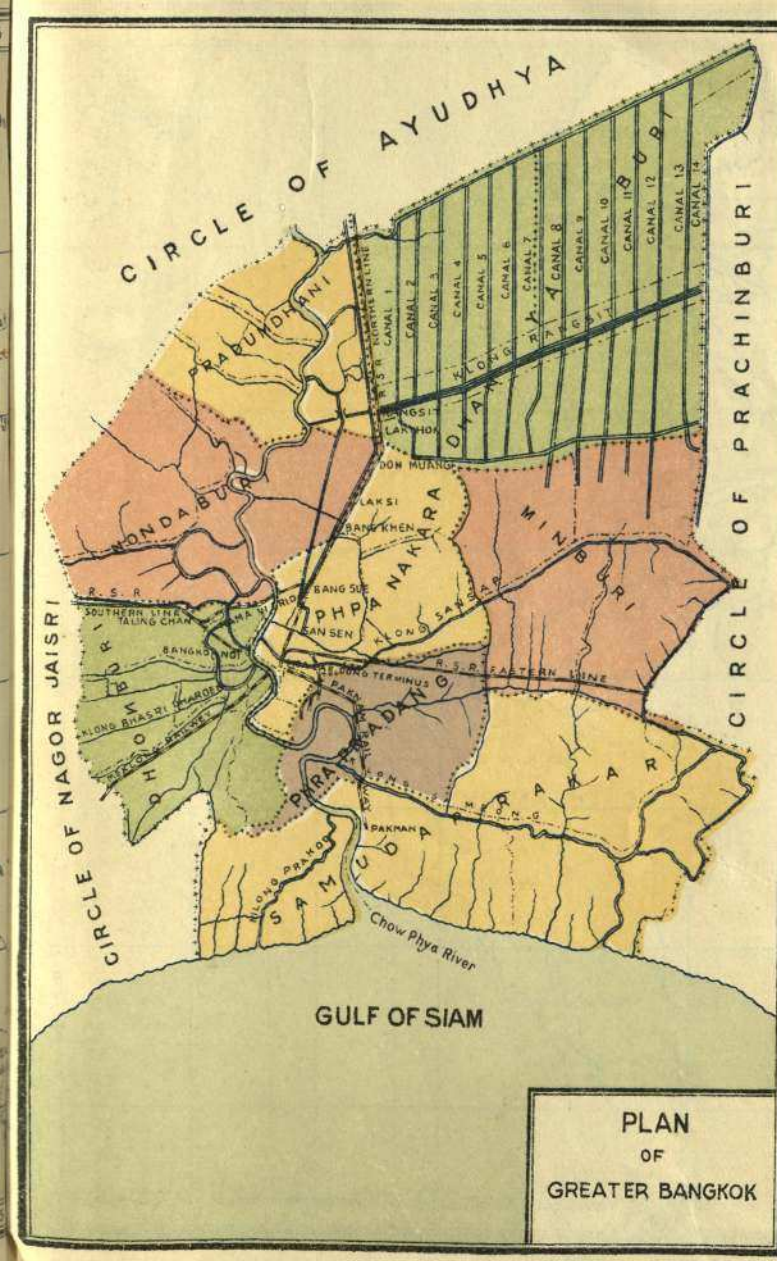
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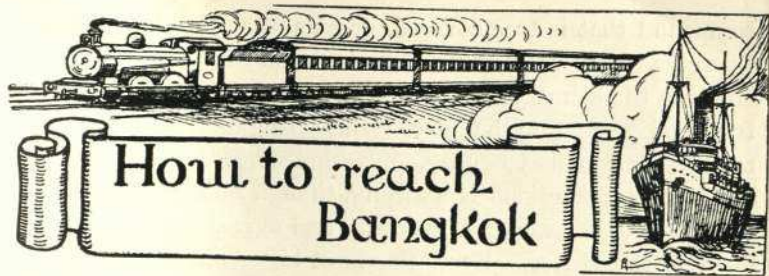
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How to reach Bangkok



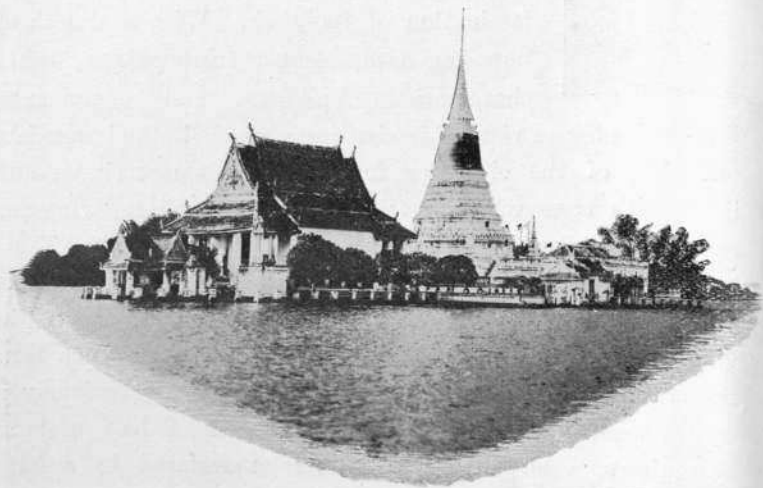
No other city in South-eastern Asia compares with Bangkok in the gripping and growing interest which leaves a permanent and fragrant impression on the mind of the visitor. It is difficult to set down in words, precisely whence comes the elusive fascination of Bangkok. With a wealth of imposing temples, beautiful palaces, other characteristic buildings and monuments,

Bangkok offers a vista of fascinating views. In the immediate outskirts of the city are found excellent motoring roads, lined with trees whose overhanging branches intertwine and effectively screen the passenger from the rays of the sun. These long, straight, shady avenues, which have an appearance almost cloistral, leave an unforgettable impression on the visitor. In no other city, is it possible to so often turn from the throng of a city street and find oneself, miraculously it would seem, in a little residential quarter of half a dozen bungalows, each sitting cool and sequestered in a large

This section on "How to reach Bangkok" is compiled by the Information Bureau, Royal State Railway Department of Siam.

compound that is tree-covered, green and refreshing. It is as though a short walk of two hundred and fifty yards had taken one into the country, miles removed from the din and dust, the fret and fever of the city. But Bangkok has more than material charms to offer. Behind and above the more substantial attractions is a strong, though inexplicable, sense of happiness in the air that instantly and agreeably communicates itself to the visitor. Even the most bitter misanthrope cannot but feel that in the very atmosphere of Bangkok, woven into all the stir and briskness of its daily life, is an impelling and pleasurable sense of more than mere contentment—of rare serenity and happiness everywhere.

More and more, do visitors return home and warmly counsel a visit to Bangkok, though unable to find adequate words for the full expression of their deep and vivid memories. Perhaps that very inadequacy is the best of proof that Bangkok holds so much worth seeing, since it defies easy description. The intending



The first sight that greets a visitor on an inbound steamer is the Island Temple at Paknam.



The Grand Palace from the river.

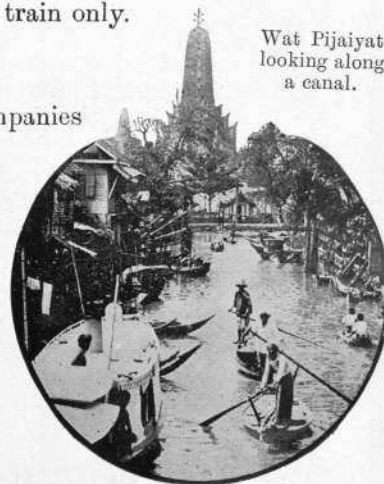


Tropical Bangkok canal.

visitor, who hears of Bangkok for perhaps the first time, very properly asks where it is and how it is to be reached. Whatever may have been the starting point of his tour the visitor comes immediately to Bangkok from Hongkong, Saigon, Singapore or Penang. Bangkok is reached from Hongkong by steamer, from Saigon by steamer and road, from Singapore by steamer and train and from Penang by train only.

FROM HONGKONG.

The following steamship companies maintain regular passenger services between Hongkong and Bangkok. Most of the steamers used in these services are more commodious and comfortable than those ordinarily found on short trips. The direct journey between Hongkong and Bangkok requires seven days, but eight days are required if the journey



Wat Pijaiyat looking along a canal.

is made via Swatow or Hoihow; twelve days via Hoihow and Singapore and thirteen days via Swatow and Singapore.

1. The China Steam Navigation Co., Ltd.

Four sailings per month via Swatow leaving Hongkong every Sunday or Monday and Bangkok on Fridays about 15 o'clock from 1st October to 31st March and on Saturdays at about the same time from 1st April to 30th September.

Sailings via Hoihow to and from Hongkong are at present irregular but approximately once a month.

A Klong (Canal) Scene.



Petchaburi rice-fields passed by the Penang-Bangkok Express.

Booking office in Hongkong: Messrs. Butterfield & Swire,
Booking office in Bangkok: The Borneo Co., Ltd.

Fare: From Hongkong 1st. class one way via Swatow or Hoihow
\$ 140.00 (Hongkong).

Round trip via Swatow or Hoihow \$ 225.00 (Hongkong).

2nd. Class one way via Swatow or Hoihow
(Excluding food) \$ 50.00 (Hongkong).

2nd. Class Round trip via Swatow or Hoihow
(Excluding food) \$ 80.00 (Hongkong).

Second class passengers are mostly Chinese.

European passengers are not booked in the second class accommodation.



The Bangkok Railway Terminus taken from the air.



Rice-fields south of Bangkok passed by the Penang-Bangkok Express.

II. Osaka Shosen Kaisha.

One sailing per month to and from Bangkok, direct connection between Bangkok, Formosa and Japan, occasionally via Saigon.

		<i>To Formosa</i>	<i>To Kobe</i>
<i>Fare</i> : 1st. class	...	Yen 120.00	160.00
3rd. class	...	Yen 35.00	45.00

III. The East Asiatic Co., Ltd.

Irregular sailings, about once a month, each way between Hongkong and Bangkok.

Booking office in Hongkong:

Messrs. Manner & Co., Ltd.

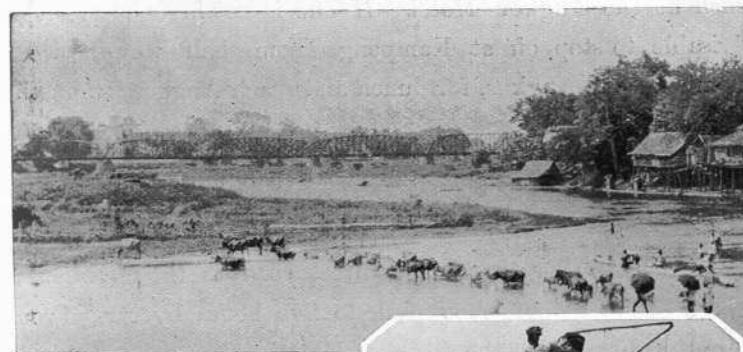
Booking office in Bangkok:

The East Asiatic Co., Ltd.

Farm life seen from the train.



A glimpse of a ricefield.



Along the railway line.

Fares: 1st Class one way
 Hongkong - Bangkok
 \$110.00 (Hongkong)
 1st Class round trip
 \$210.00 (Hongkong).



Fishing in South Siam.

**FROM HONGKONG via SAIGON, PNOMPENH,
 and ANGKOR to BANGKOK.**

Between Hongkong and Saigon, there is a regular steamship service by the Messageries Maritimes. From Saigon there are good motor roads to Pnompenh and Angkor. Starting out from Saigon by motor car in the morning at about 7 o'clock, and with a fair speed, Pnompenh, the Capital of Cambodia is reached at about 13 o'clock. The King's palace and the museum are well worth visiting. Accommodation overnight in Pnompenh can always be obtained.

From Pnompenh to Angkor, the travellers are advised to start at about 5 o'clock in the morning. In such case they will arrive at Angkor between noon and 13 o'clock, in time for

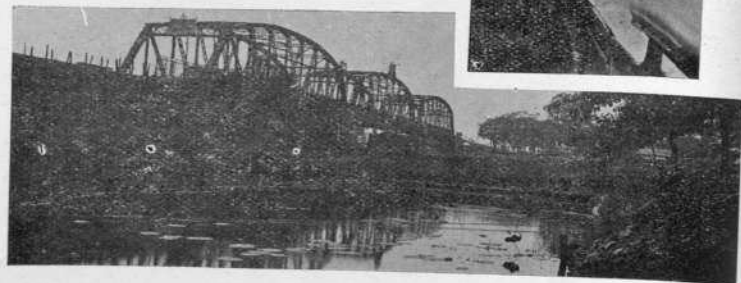
lunch at the Angkor Hotel. If one is not in a hurry, it is advisable to stop off at Kampong Thom, half way between Pnompenh and Angkor, for lunch and reach Angkor late in the afternoon.

The hotel at Angkor charges 13.00 piastres per day per person.

From Angkor there is a direct road to the Frontier, a village called Poipet, about four to five hours by car. From there the distance to the Siamese Frontier Railway Station is only about five kilometres.

It is always advisable however to get accurate information of the state of the roads during the rainy season, May to November.

From Aranya Pradesa to Bangkok, there is a daily train leaving Aranya Pradesa at 9.30 o'clock and arriving at Bangkok at 17.10 o'clock.



Chulalongkorn Bridge
crossed by the Penang-Bangkok Train.

First class compartment on the
Penang-Bangkok Express.

FROM SAIGON.

I. By Motor Bus and Railway.

There is also a regular motor bus service from Saigon to Pnompenh and from Pnompenh via Battambang to Aranya Pradesa, the Siamese Frontier Station, to connect with the Siamese train to Bangkok. This is the quickest route and requires only 3 days between Saigon and Bangkok. The cost of the journey including hotel expenses is approximately \$60.00 (piastres). For detailed information apply to the Bureau du Tourisme en Indo-Chine at Saigon or Pnompenh or to any Thomas Cook or American Express Office or to the Information Bureau of the Royal State Railways of Siam at Bangkok.

II. By Steamer.

The Société des Affréteurs Indochinois operates a monthly round trip service between Saigon - Bangkok - Singapore - Saigon. The exact date of sailings, fares, etc. can be obtained from the firm's office in Saigon or Bangkok.



Interior of a restaurant car
Penang-Bangkok Express.

International Express at
Petchaburi.

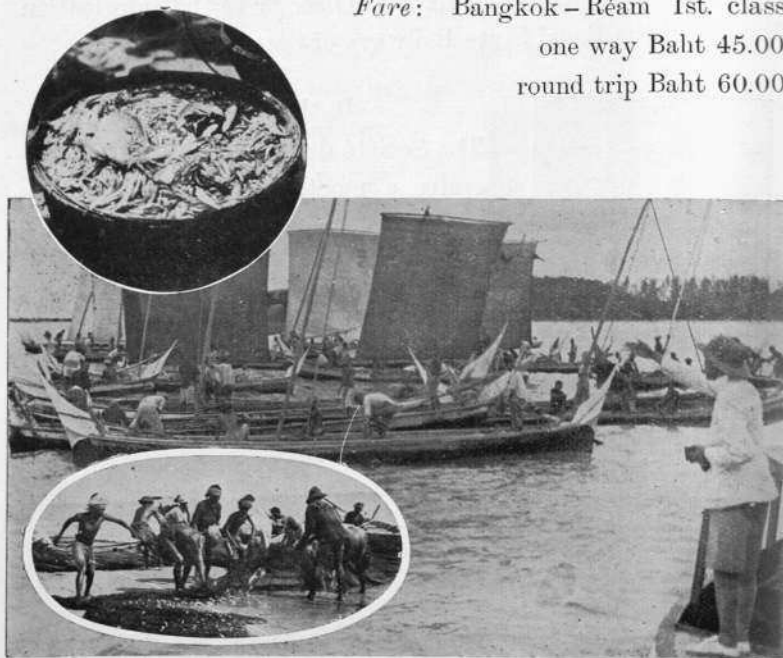
III. By Motor Bus and Steamer via Réam.

Réam is about 14 hours by motor car from Saigon. There are two sailings a week by the Siam Steam Navigation Company's steamers in each direction leaving Réam on Mondays and Fridays at 15 o'clock and leaving Bangkok on Saturdays and Wednesdays at noon.

Booking office at Saigon: Société Commerciale Française de l'Indo-Chine.

Booking office at Bangkok: The East Asiatic Co., Ltd.

Fare: Bangkok-Réam 1st. class
one way Baht 45.00
round trip Baht 60.00



Fishing in South Siam.

FROM SINGAPORE.

Travellers from Australia, Java, Sumatra, Borneo and the Philippine Islands often pass through Singapore on their way to Siam.

The Federated Malay States Railways and the Royal State Railways of Siam run express trains between Singapore and Bangkok via Kuala Lumpur and Prai. There are two express trains leaving Singapore daily for Penang, one in the morning and one late in the afternoon. Condensed time tables for these trains and various details are given below.

To Bangkok.

Dep. Singapore (Tank Road)	8.30 o'clock daily		
Arr. Kuala Lumpur	18.09	"	"
Dep. Kuala Lumpur	20.00	"	"
Dep. Ipoh	1.26	"	"
Arr. Prai (Penang)	5.58	"	"

Malay women in Patani.



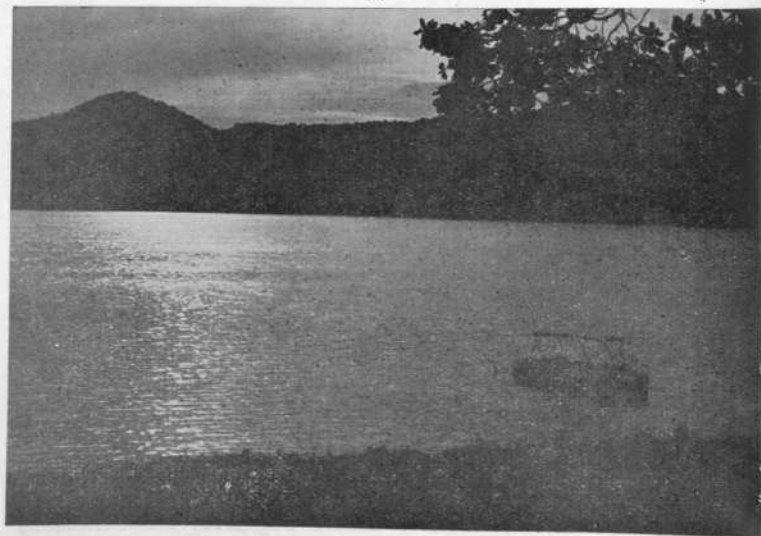
Canoe used in South Siam.

To Bangkok.—(contd.)

Dep. Prai	9.50	o'clock Tuesdays and Fridays			
Arr. Alor Star	12.04	"	"	"	"
Dep. Alor Star	12.07	"	"	"	"
Arr. Padang Besar	13.27	"	"	"	"
Dep. Padang Besar	14.25	"	"	"	"
Arr. Hua Hin	11.05	"	"	"	"
Dep. Hua Hin	11.07	"	"	"	"
Arr. Bangkok	16.50	,, Wednesdays and Saturdays			

From Bangkok.

Dep. Bangkok	7.40	o'clock Wednesdays and Sundays			
Arr. Hua Hin	13.29	"	"	"	"
Dep. Hua Hin	13.31	"	"	"	"
Arr. Padang Besar	9.17	,, Thursdays and Mondays			
Dep. Padang Besar	10.20	"	"	"	"
Arr. Alor Star	11.55	"	"	"	"
Dep. Alor Star	11.59	"	"	"	"
Arr. Prai	14.29	"	"	"	"
Dep. Prai	20.41	,, Daily			
Arr. Ipoh	1.11	"	"	"	"
Arr. Kuala Lumpur	6.26	"	"	"	"



Sunset at Singora.

From Bangkok.—(contd.)

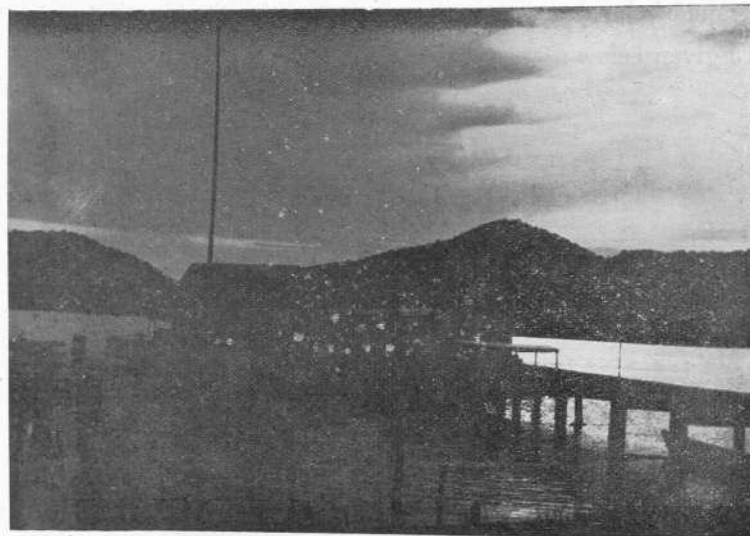
Dep. Kuala Lumpur	9.00	o'clock Daily.	
Arr. Singapore (Tank Road)	18.25	o'clock Daily.	

Fare. Singapore-Bangkok 1st. class Baht 97.10 or \$ 78.13

2nd. ,, Baht 53.00 ,, \$ 42.63

3rd. ,, Baht 35.30 ,, \$ 28.37

Travellers will find the journey between Singapore and Bangkok quite comfortable for the Federated Malay State Railways and the Royal State Railways of Siam pay the utmost attention to their sleeping and restaurant car services. The scenery along the line will give the traveller a good impression of



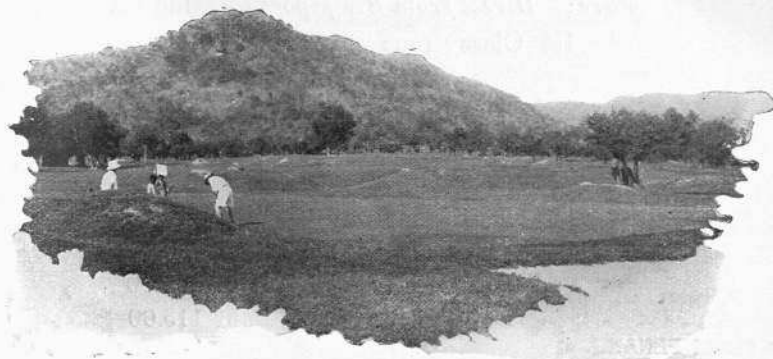
Sunset at Singora.

both British Malaya and Siam. The privilege of breaking journey at various interesting points makes it more advantageous to travel by rail. Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh are two interesting cities in British Malaya well worth visiting. Hua Hin-on-sea in Siamese territory is one of the finest seaside resorts east of Suez, and possesses one of the best golf courses in the Orient. All these places have excellent accommodation. Thomas Cook & Son, Ltd., and the American Express Co. Inc. in Singapore are agents for both railways. They will arrange tickets and reservations in sleeping cars and hotels in a most efficient manner.

Three steamship companies operate passenger services between Singapore and Bangkok. The journey by sea requires about four days, about two days longer than by rail. The details of the steamer services between Singapore and Bangkok are given below:



Hua Hin-on-Sea, the famous health resort of Siam.



Royal Golf Course at Hua Hin.

I. The Straits Steamship Co., Ltd.

Weekly sailings leaving Singapore on Sunday mornings and Bangkok on Saturday afternoon.

Booking office in Singapore: Mansfield & Co., Ltd.,
Collyer Quay

Booking office in Bangkok: The Borneo Co., Ltd.

<i>Fare: 1st. Class ... one way ...</i>	\$ 70.00
<i>round trip ...</i>	\$ 120.00
<i>2nd Class ... one way ...</i>	\$ 40.00
<i>round trip ...</i>	\$ 75.00

II. The Siam Steam Navigation Co., Ltd.

Five direct sailings a month, leaving Singapore and Bangkok irregularly.

Weekly sailings via coast ports, leaving Singapore every Wednesday at 15 o'clock and leaving Bangkok every Saturday at 15 o'clock.

Booking Office in Singapore: The Straits Steamship Co., Ltd.

Booking Office in Bangkok: The East Asiatic Co., Ltd.

Fare: Direct from Singapore to Bangkok.

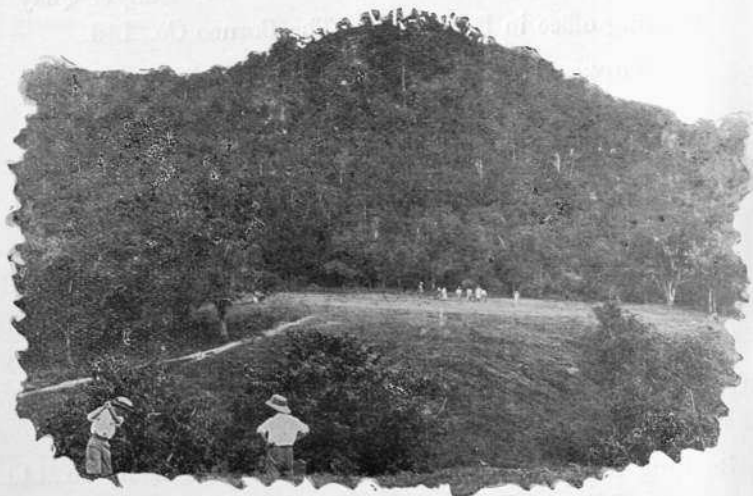
1st Class	(one way)	\$ 70.00
	(round trip)	\$ 120.00
2nd Class	(one way)	\$ 40.00
	(round trip)	\$ 70.00

From Singapore via coast ports.

1st Class	(one way)	Baht 110.00
	(round trip)	Baht 200.00
2nd Class	(one way)	Baht 65.00
	(round trip)	Baht 115.00

FROM PENANG.

Penang is the gateway for travellers from Europe, India, Burma and Sumatra and the Royal State Railways of Siam operate two trains a week between Penang and Bangkok leaving Prai on Tuesday and Friday. The following is the condensed schedule and various details of the Penang-Bangkok service.



The Royal Golf Course at Hua Hin.

To Bangkok.

Dep. Penang	9.10 o'clock	Tuesdays and Fridays.
Dep. Prai	9.50 o'clock	" " "
Arr. Padang Besar	13.27 o'clock	" " "
Dep. Padang Besar	14.25 o'clock	" " "
Arr. Bangkok	16.50 o'clock	Wednesdays and Saturdays.

From Bangkok.

Dep. Bangkok	7.40 o'clock	Wednesdays and Sundays.
Arr. Padang Besar	9.17 o'clock	Thursdays and Mondays.
Dep. Padang Besar	10.20 o'clock	" " "
Arr. Prai	14.29 o'clock	" " "
Arr. Penang	15.06 o'clock	" " "

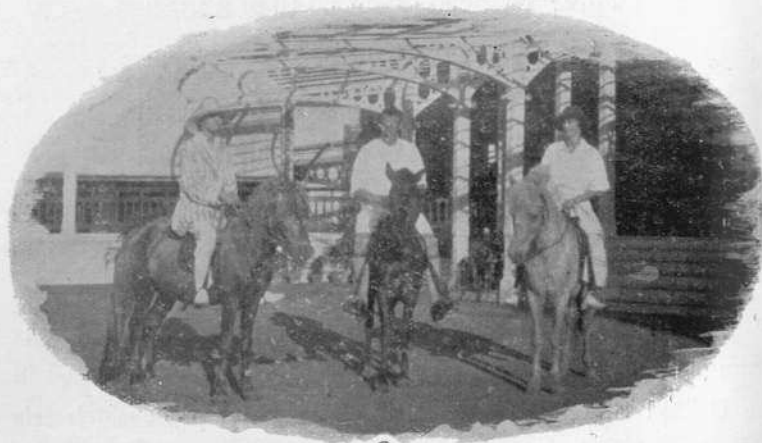
Fare: 1st. class Baht 60.10 or \$ 48.39

2nd. class Baht 35.20 or \$ 28.29

3rd. class Baht 23.40 or \$ 18.78

Travellers will find every comfort and convenience on the express trains between Penang and Bangkok. The first class Day and Night Coaches used in this service are arranged in compartments. Each compartment contains two berths arranged somewhat like the Pullman compartment car used in the United States. There are, in each compartment, electric fans, electric lights, wash stand with running water and a good

supply of towels and soap. The Royal State Railways of Siam take great pride in their restaurant car service and experienced cooks are employed to serve a wholesome and excellent cuisine. The late Lord Northcliffe remarked in the *Daily Mail*: "My principal recollections of the Siamese State Railways are of wonderful smoothness of running, of beautiful scenery, and of one of the most peaceful and comfortable train journeys I can remember". The scenery along the line is most interesting and the travellers will be impressed with the beauty of the tropical nature of the country. The privilege of breaking journey is granted so that tourists may stop off at interesting places en route. Hua Hin-on-sea, the famous seaside resort of Siam, with its excellent golf course, is most popular with travellers especially those who are longing for a round of golf. The Hua Hin Hotel carries a stock of golf requisites and the loan of clubs can be made to visiting golfers. Swimming, shooting and fishing are among the popular sports at Hua Hin.



Off for a ride.

Hua Hin-on-Sea.

Sunrise
Hua Hin-on-Sea.**PASSPORT.**

A Traveller who does not possess a passport to Siam is advised to call on the Siamese Consul stationed in almost every important port. No difficulty will be experienced in going through the formality required.

The hand luggage and passport belonging to a traveller by rail from Penang or Singapore is examined at Padang Besar, the frontier station, while heavy luggage is examined at the Bangkok Terminus.

Passengers arriving by steamer should have their luggage examined on board. Passengers who possess fire-arms or any kind of ammunition should obtain a temporary permit from the Customs officer at Padang Besar or on board the steamer at Paknam before entering the territory of the Kingdom.

CLOTHING.

Clothing for use in Bangkok should be as light as possible. Generally speaking, Bangkok is cooler than Singapore,



Tennis Courts at Hua Hin-on-Sea.

Penang or Colombo and therefore clothing used in any of these cities will be found quite satisfactory for Bangkok wear. The light summer clothing used in England and the United States with an addition of a sun hat will answer the requirements.

ON ARRIVAL AT BANGKOK.

The traveller is advised to look out for the various hotel representatives who meet every inbound express train or steamer. Nevertheless, it is advisable to book hotel accommodation in advance either by wire direct to the hotel manager or by arrangement through the tourist agencies, Thomas Cook & Son Ltd., or The American Express Co. Inc.

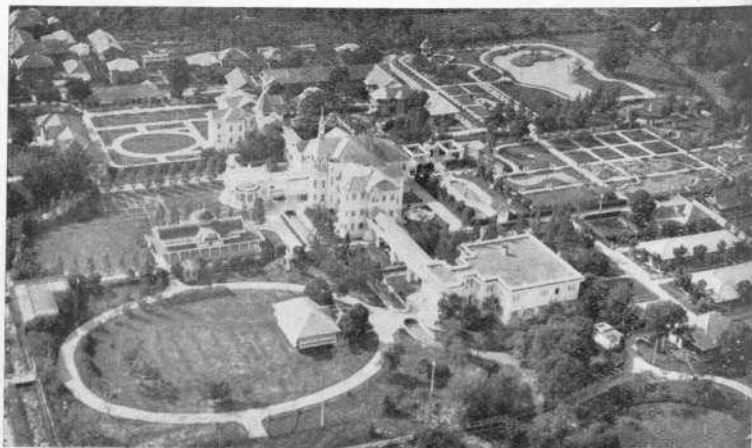


In the matter of accommodation, Bangkok is now an easy leader in the Far East. Its hotels are numerous and are suitable for all classes of travellers. The increase in tourist traffic to Siam within recent years has brought about a greater demand for accommodation and this has encouraged capitalists to invest, with the result that Bangkok now possesses more comfortable, and up-to-date hotels than most of the cities in Asia. We offer below some notes on the leading hotels in Bangkok which can be recommended to tourists.

PHYA THAI PALACE, Rajavithi Road.

This is the finest hotel in Bangkok, from whatever point it is viewed. Phya Thai used to be a royal palace and a palace it still remains in all essentials; some slight alterations have been made to adapt it for use as a hotel. Special mention must be made of its suites de luxe—one of these, the Royal Suite—which are the equal of the finest suites to be found

This section on "Accommodation" is compiled by the Information Bureau, Royal State Railway Dept. of Siam.



PHYA THAI PALACE from the air
(taken by the Siamese Aeronautical Service).

elsewhere. Other bedrooms are numerous and are graded to meet the requirements of all classes of tourists, but all have a comfort and an elegance foreign to most hotels. There are half a dozen sequestered bungalows for those who wish to

be apart. In a word, the Phya Thai Palace is able to provide every necessity and every luxury that are met in the finest hotels in Europe and America. The hotel is set in the midst of an open plain, which is relieved by trees, green, intensively cultivated and restful to the eye. It is open



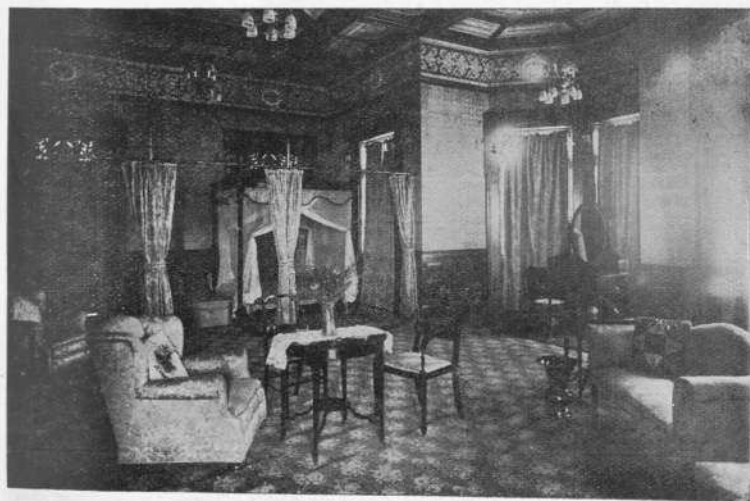
Roman Garden, Phya Thai Palace.

to breezes from any quarter and is free from the din and the dust of the city. It is within easy reach of the show places of Bangkok, which the visitor has come to visit, and of the shopping centres.

The gardens which surround the hotel have been laid out with such exquisite art that new beauties are constantly being discovered however long the visitor may remain.



Miniature Waterfalls, Phya Thai Palace.



Bedroom de Luxe. Phya Thai Palace.

There is a special dance pavilion and a billiard room. Motor cars are provided for the use of guests at reasonable rates. Servants of the hotel meet all trains and steamers arrange for the transport of luggage, and place motor cars at the disposal of tourists. Guides whether for sight-seeing in the city or for tours up-country, are provided by the hotel at fixed charges and for those who prefer to be without a guide and to discover the charms of the city and country for themselves, tours will be arranged by the hotel management and helpful suggestions made.

The cuisine is unrivalled and is the equal of that to be found in any part of the world. The service is most favourably commented upon as being particularly smooth and the attention paid visitors—the desire to meet every wish, however unexpected it may be—is one of the most pleasing features of the hotel.

It is the high aim of the management to ensure that the Phya Thai Palace shall rival in many respects and outvie in others the best known hotels in other parts of the world.



Siamese Classical Dance on a gala night
Phya Thai Palace.



Waiting room, Phya Thai Palace.

Tariff:—

Single Rooms Baht 12.00 per day
(including meals).

Special Single Rooms
with bath room
Baht 24.00, 25.00, 31.00 ..

Double Rooms without bath room
Baht 22.00, 24.00, 25.00 ..

Double Rooms with bath room
Baht 30.00, 32.00, 37.00 ..

Suite de Luxe No. 2,
including Bedroom,
Bathroom and Sit-
ting room, but excluding
Food Baht 100.00 ..

Suite de Luxe No. 3,
including Bedroom,
Bathroom and a
large Verandah, but
excluding Food Baht 80.00 ..

Charges for Motor car, Bus and Lorry.

Saloon and Touring Cars.
First hour Baht 2.50
Each succeeding
hour or part
thereof Baht 1.50

To or from the station on arrival and departure, including
the use of Runners and Lorry for Luggage Baht 2.00
Hire of motor car per day up to 20 o'clock Baht 15.00



Reception room, Phya Thai Palace.

Telegraphic Address:

PHYATHAI BANGKOK

Agents:—Thomas Cook & Son, Ltd.

The American Express Co., Inc.

Reservation can be made either direct with the hotel or through the agents.

Lorry. First Hour Baht 3.00
 „ Each succeeding
 hour or part Baht 2.60

Charges for Meals and Accommodation for Children.

- A. Charges per day
 for accommoda-
 tion and food
 for a child up to
 3 years of age Baht 2.00
- B. For children bet-
 ween the ages of
 3 years and 16
 years, the scale
 of charges to be
 half of those
 stated in the
 Tariff.
- C. For children over
 10 years of age,
 the same as for adults.

Charges for Meals to Guests in Residence.

Morning Tea ..	Baht 0.50
(except those who take all their meals in the hotel)	
Breakfast ..	Baht 2.00
Tiffin ..	Baht 2.50
Afternoon Tea ..	Baht 0.50
Dinner ..	Baht 3.50



ROYAL HOTEL, BANGKOK.

ROYAL HOTEL: Sathorn Road.

Under its new proprietorship, the Royal Hotel has recently been extensively enlarged and improved.

Being specially adapted to the requirements of a tropical country, it is nevertheless modern in every detail, with up to date installations, water laid on, electric light and fans in all rooms, all of which are well furnished.

Its buildings are large and clean, surrounded with a beautiful view, free from dust and noise. It is near to most of the Legations and Consulates.

It is centrally situated in the best residential quarter in a healthy district and possesses a large beautiful garden,

The hotel's porter meets all inbound trains and steamers.

Tariff.

Per person per day			
Single room	..	..	Baht 16.00, 14.00, 12.00
Double room	..	..	Baht 30.00, 26.00, 22.00
Meals for non-residents			
Breakfast	..	..	Baht 2.00
Luncheon	..	..	Baht 2.50
Dinner	..	..	Baht 3.50
Motor cars	..	..	Baht 4—5 per hour

RAJDHANI HOTEL.

This Hotel is situated at the Bangkok Railway Terminus and is under the management of the Royal State Railways of Siam. Its location is most convenient to commercial travellers and tourists who wish to be in the heart of the city. The Hotel is especially designed to suit a tropical climate, giving a maximum of comfort and convenience to the guests. Every room



Rajdhani Hotel.

has a bath room with hot and cold water laid on, and a luggage room attached and is fully equipped with electric light, fans and telephone. The large kitchen of the Hotel is kept under most sanitary conditions, periodically inspected by the Railway Medical Officer ensuring the purity and wholesomeness of the food served.

Motor cars and launches can be hired through the hotel management at the lowest rates charged in Bangkok.

Tariff.

Room, including Breakfast per person	..	Baht 5.00
Room, including Breakfast, Tiffin and Dinner per person	..	.. 10.00
Room, including Breakfast, Tiffin and Dinner, two persons	..	.. 16.00
Suite de Luxe, excluding meals	..	.. 20.00



The Corridor. Rajdhani Hotel.

HOTEL TROCADERO.

The Hotel Trocadero is under French Management. It is the newest and centrally located in the shopping district of the city. All rooms have bath rooms attached. Billiard Room, smoking room, private dining rooms, and sample rooms for commercial travellers are available.

Tariff.

Single with bath including meals	..	Baht	12.00, 15.00
Double	..	..	20.00, 25.00, 30.00

Meals for non-residents

Breakfast	..	..	Baht 1.50
Tiffin	..	..	2.50
Tea	..	..	.75
Dinner	..	..	3.00

Motor cars and guides are provided for sightseeing at a reasonable charge.

EUROPE HOTEL.—New Road.

The Europe Hotel is situated in the business section of Bangkok. It is under European management, offering accommodation and service at the following tariff:

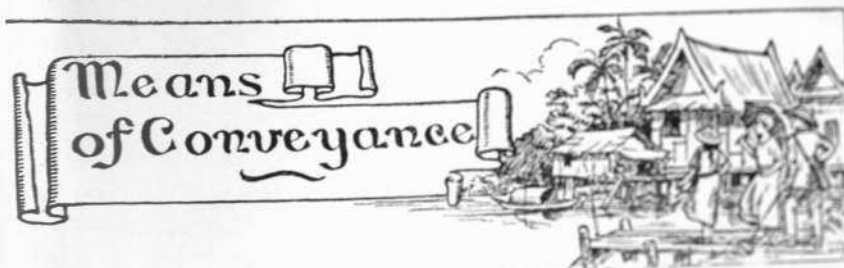
Tariff.

Per person per day (Board and Lodging)			
Single room	..	Baht	7.00, 8.00
Double rooms (Board & Lodging)	..	Baht	6.00, 7.00

Meals

Breakfast	Baht 1.25	Luncheon	Baht 1.75
Dinner	Baht 2.50	Tea	Baht 0.50

Motor Cars	..	Baht	2.00 per hour
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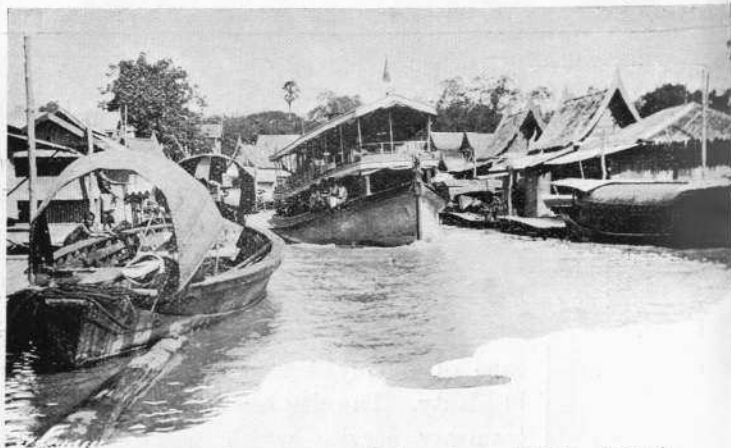
in Bangkok, besides
full of fascination

Means of conveyance in Bangkok there are in plenty. The city has an efficient electric tramway service which was established at a time when many European cities were still content with horse-drawn trams. The lines stretch far out and reach almost to the extreme boundaries of the city. By using the tramways only, the visitor can cheaply and easily reach nearly every place of interest

which trips by the tram are
for the visitor who wishes to



Ordinary Sampan to be
seen in Bangkok.



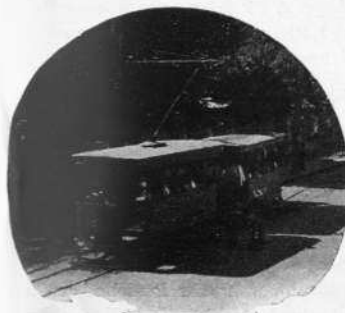
A passenger motor launch on a Klong. (canal).



A Rickisha.

learn something of the peoples of Bangkok. We say "peoples" because the trams are always found packed with passengers belonging to a variety of races, nations and creeds, all of whom find shelter within Siam's hospitable shores. There will be found sitting together yellow robed Siamese monks, long bearded Arabs, sarong clad Malays, voluble Chinese who would appear to keep no secrets from the outside world and yet keep many, dark-skinned Tamils, Burmese, Mon, the panung-clad Thai and members of a host of other races. These, for the newcomer, form a picture of unending interest.

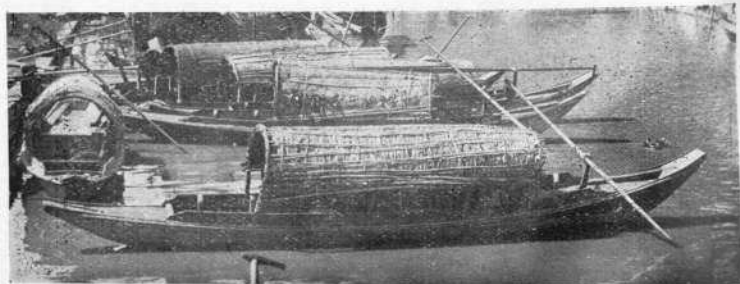
For longer trips than are possible by the tram, such as to the Throne Hall and Wat Benchamabopitr, motor cars or horse carriages are necessary, either of these can be ordered through the hotel in which the visitor is staying. The charge for motor cars per hour varies according to their size and it is well to ascertain the rate before starting. All hackney carriages are provided with a set of rules and rates as fixed by law. These are printed both in Siamese and English and can be consulted by the visitor who is in any doubt as to the rates.



Bangkok Trams.

Should the visitor find himself in a difficulty of any kind he is advised not to approach the policeman on point duty. These men do not speak English, but the petty officers do, for the most part, and it is seldom difficult to find one. They will be found courteous and obliging to a degree.

For shorter trips inside the city the rickisha will be found most convenient and these are to be secured everywhere. The



Sampan.

visitor who wishes to cross to the west bank of the river in order to visit Wat Arun, Wat Kalaya or Wat Pijaiyat or to enjoy a trip along the river can secure a motor or steam launch at a reasonable rate. The hotel manager will be able to make the necessary arrangement. An ordinary sampan is sometimes very handy.

Rates for Conveyances.

Motor Taxi	..	..	Approx. 35 Satang per mile or Baht 1.50 per hour or as may be arranged with driver.
Trams	..	..	10 Satang per zone.
Rickisha	..	..	about 25 Satang per 10 mins. run.
Sampan	..	..	ranging from 3 to 10 Satang for crossing the river.
Launch	..	..	Baht 5.00 first hour. Baht 3.00 each successive hour. (Steam or motor launches can be obtained at this rate by applying to the Railway Information Bureau).

Currency + Weights and Measures



The Standard currency in Siam is gold, its unit being the Baht (Tical), the exchange value of which is approximately 11 Baht to the pound sterling. Subsidiary coins are in decimal units and the coins in use are:

One-Satang piece.....	bronze
Five-Satang piece.....	nickel
Ten-Satang piece.....	nickel
Twenty-five-Satang piece.....	silver (one salung)
Fifty-Satang piece.....	silver (two salung)
Tical (100 Satang)	silver (one Baht)

Gold coins are not issued for circulation.

Currency notes are issued in one, five, ten, twenty, one hundred, and one thousand Baht units.

Weights and Measures.

By a law promulgated towards the end of B. E. 2466, (A. D. 1924), the metric system was introduced but the old forms of weights and measures are, for a period, still allowed to be used,

Measures of Weight.

Siamese units.	Metric equivalents.	English equivalents.
1 Baht (weight of one-tical piece)	15 grammes	.53 ounces
4 Baht ... equals ... 1 tamlung	60 grammes	2.12 ounces
20 tamlungs ,, ... 1 chang	1.2 kgs.	2.65 lbs
50 changs ,, ... 1 hap or picul	60. kgs.	132.5 lbs

Lineal Measure.

Siamese units.	Metric equivalents.	English equivalents.
1 niu	2.08 cm.	.85 inch
12 niu equals 1 keup	25 cm.	10 ins.
2 keup ,, 1 sok	50 cm.	1 ft. 8 ins.
4 sok ,, 1 wah	2 m.	2 yards 6.5 in
20 wah equals 1 sen	40 m.	43 yds. 2' 2.5"
400 sen ,, 1 yode	16 kms.	9 miles 1657 yds. 2 ft. 2.75 ins.

For calculating distances take 25 sen equal to one kilometre.

Square (land) Measure.

Siamese units.	Metric equivalents.	English equivalents.
1 sq. wah	4 sq. m.	4.8 sq. yds.
100 sq. wah equals 1 ngan	400 sq. m.	478.4 sq. yds.
4 ngan ,, 1 rai	1600 sq. m.	1913.6 sq. yds.

Cubic Measure.

Siamese units.	Metric equivalents	English equivalents.
1 thanan	1.00 litre	.22 imp. gallon
20 thanan equals 1 thang	20 litres	4.54 imp. gallons
25 thanan ,, 1 sat	25 litres	5.64 imp. gallons
80 sat ,, 1 kwien	2000 litres	454 imp. gallons

Banks, Consulates, Hospitals, Post and Telegraph offices etc etc.

(For the leading firms in Bangkok, see advertisements).

Banks.

- Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. - *Hongkong Bank Lane.*
E9 (22).
- Chartered Bank of India Australia and China - *Chartered Bank Lane.*
E10 (71).
- Banque de l'Indo-Chine - *Oriental Avenue*
E10 (72).
- Siam Commercial Bank, Ltd. - *Yotha Road. D9 (73).*
- Mercantile Bank of India - *Bush Lane. E9*
- Bank of Canton, Ltd. - *173 Jawarad Road.*
D7 (75).

Legations and Consulates.

- The British Legation and Consulate General - *Ploen Chit Road.*
H7 (76).
- French Legation and Consulate General - *Custom House Lane.*
E10 (43).
- American Legation - *Sathorn Road near Convent Road. G10 (40).*

Index number after address indicates where that place may be located on the Plan.

U. S. Department of Commerce - *Chartered Bank Lane*
on the upper floor of
Windsor's Building
E10 (77).

Japanese Legation and Consulate
 General

- *Rajadamri Road. H.*

Italian Legation and Consulate

- *Ploen Chitr Road.*

Belgian Legation and Consulate

- *Sathorn Road.*

Norwegian Consulate

- *c/o E. C. Monod & Co.*
Bush Lane. E9 (27).

Netherlands Legation

- *Wireless Road.*

Swedish Consulate-General

- *Chakrapeth Road.*
Siam Electricity Co's.
Bld. C8 (18).

Portuguese Consulate

- *Bush Lane. E9 (44).*

German Legation

- *Surisak Road. E10 (80).*

Danish Consulate-General

- *East Asiatic Co.*
Oriental Avenue.

Hospitals.

Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital - *Saladeng G9.*

Nursing Home - *Convent Road. G10.*

St. Louis Hospital - *Sathorn Road. F10.*

Central Hospital - *Luang Road. D7 (65).*

(Under the Public Health Dept.)

Vajira Hospital (" ") - *Samsen Road. D3 (81).*

Saovabha Memorial Institute - *Saladeng. G9.*

(Pasteur Institute)

Siriraj Hospital

- *West Bank near*
Bangkok Noi
Railway Station. A6

Bangrak Hospital

- *Silom Road near New*
Road. E10 (82).

Doctors.

For medical practitioners consult the "Bangkok Directory"
 to be found in every hotel.

Post and Telegraph Offices.

There are eight government post and telegraph offices in
 Bangkok. Their locations and the hours during which they are
 opened for the transaction of postal business are as follows:

General Post Office

New Road between Siphya & Surinongse Roads. E9 & 10. 8 to 18 o'clock.
Telegrams are accepted at this office at all hours.

Post Office No. 1

In the Post Office Lane off Chakrapeth Road
opposite the Siam Electric Corp., Wat Lieb. C8 (20). 8 to 17 o'clock.

Post Office No. 4

Naphralan Road. B6 (84). 8 to 17 o'clock.
Near to the river opposite the Grand Palace.

Post Office No. 5

Rong Muang Road at the Railway Station. E8. 8 to 17 o'clock.

Post Office No. 6

Pratu Mai. C5 (91).

8 to 17 o'clock.

Post Office No. 7

Samsen Road near Rajavithi Road. D3 (89).

8 to 17 o'clock.

Post Office No. 8

Jawaraj Road. D8 (85).

8 to 17 o'clock.

Post Office No. 12

Talat Ploo, Klong Bangkok Yai.

8 to 17 o'clock.

Besides the eight Government Post Offices there are many licensed post offices throughout the city. For detailed information regarding postal service see "Postal Guide" obtainable at the General Post Office for Baht 1.00 per copy.

Inland money orders are accepted at the General Post Office and Post Offices No. 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8. Money orders for foreign countries only at the General Post Office and Post Offices 1, 7 and 8. The office hours for money order transactions are: General Post Office from 8 to 11 o'clock and from 11.30 to 13.30 o'clock. Other offices from 10 to 15 o'clock.

On *Sundays* and some of the Government holidays the counters are open only from 8 to 9 o'clock.

In the event of a *European mail* arriving at Bangkok after the ordinary business hours, the General Post Office is opened for delivery of correspondence as soon as possible after the mails have been sorted and is kept open for one hour, up to 22 o'clock.

Correspondence marked "By Express" will be delivered as soon as received at the Post Office. The fee is 30 Satang.

RATES OF POSTAGE ON LETTER-MAIL.

	Local	Inland	Foreign
	Stang	Stang	Stang
Letters, inland and local, for every.....20 gr.	10	10	..
„ foreign, for the first.....20 gr.	..	..	15
for every additional 20 gr.	..	..	10
Post cards, single.....	5	5	10
„ with reply.....	..	..	20
Printed Matter, for every.....50 gr.	3	3	3
Commercial Papers for every.....50 gr.	3	3	3
Minimum.....	12	12	15
Patterns and Samples of Merchandise for every.....50 gr.	3	3	3
Minimum.....	6	6	6
Registered Newspaper for the first.....200 gr.	5	5	..
for every additional.....100 gr.	5	5	..
"Blind Literature" packets for every....500 gr.	..	..	3
Mixed Packets.....50 gr.	3	3	3
If the packet contains commercial papers the minimum rate is.....	12	12	15
If the packet contains samples the minimum rate is.....	6	6	6
Registration Fee.....	15	15	15
Fee for Acknowledgement of Receipt or Advice of Payment.....	15	15	15
Late Fee.....	15	15	15
Express Delivery.....	30	30	30
Reply Coupons.....	..	..	20
Investigation Fee for ordinary letters, etc.	20	20	30

Parcel Post Service.

The rates of postage on parcels are as follows:

Local & Inland. 25 Stang per 500 grammes of weight up to 5 Kgs. and 15 Stang for every additional 500 grammes up to 10 Kgs. only, except to or from Mehongsoarn and Maesod 50 Stang per 500 grammes for parcels of weight not exceeding 5 Kgs. Prepayment of postage is compulsory.

Foreign.

Size and Weight. The dimensions of the parcel must not exceed 60 centimetres in width, 60 cms. in depth, and 1 metre in length. The limit of weight is 5 kilogrammes for some countries and 10 kgs. for others.

Money Orders.

Inland: the commission on inland money orders is 15 Stang per money order with an addition of 1 Stang for every 2 Baht (or Fraction) of the amount.

Foreign: on money orders to Belgium, China, Free City of Danzig, Denmark, France, Germany, Indo-China and all other French Colonies and Establishments in foreign countries, Iceland, Italy and Italian Colonies, Japan and Japanese Colonies, Netherland East Indies, Norway, Spain and Switzerland same as for inland money orders.

To all other countries 20 Stang per 15 Baht with a minimum charge of 25 Stang.

Telegrams.

The following is the tariff per word of 15 characters or 5 figures in plain language, and 10 characters or 5 figures in code language. In a mixed telegram, i.e. composed of words in plain language and words in code language, the words are counted at the rate of one word for each indivisible series of 10 characters which they contain.

I. Inland.

80 Stang for the first 10 words and 5 Stang for each additional word. Urgent telegrams double rate. Receipt included in all cases.

II. Foreign.

(Where various routes are available only the cheapest is mentioned.)

Australia, via Saigon	..	..	Baht	1.45
Ceylon, via Moulmein	..	..	..	0.70
China-Hongkong, (Radio)	..	..	..	0.75
.. Shanghai, (Radio)	..	..	..	0.90
Dutch East Indies, (Radio)	..	..	..	0.80
East Coast of Sumatra (Radio)	..	..	..	0.80
Europe (except Canary, Faroe & certain Greece Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Spitzbergen.) (Radio)	..	..	..	1.10
F. M. S. and Straits Settlements, overland	..	..	..	0.15
India, via Moulmein	..	..	..	0.40
Indo-China	..	..	..	0.30
Japan, (Radio)	..	..	..	1.25
Manila, (Radio)	..	..	..	0.80
New Zealand, via Saigon	..	..	..	1.60
U. S. of America, via Manila	..	..	..	..
.. New York (Radio)	..	..	..	1.65
.. Chicago (Radio)	..	..	..	1.65
.. San Francisco (Radio, Bangkok-Manila)	..	..	..	1.80

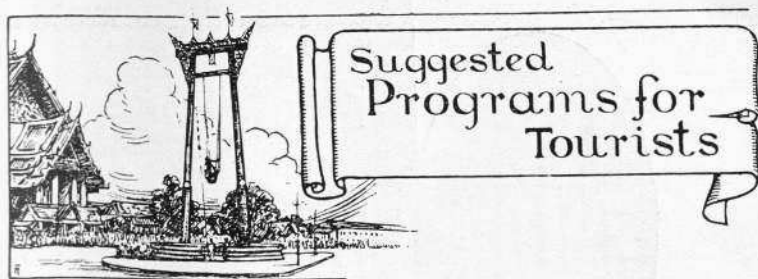
Receipt included in all cases.

Deferred rate telegrams may be sent to almost all foreign countries except Malaya, Indo-China and Burma at half the ordinary rate. They must be in plain language only (Siamese, English, French, or that of the receiving country). Figures or commercial marks and abbreviated expressions are admitted at the count of five characters per word. The number of such words or groups must not exceed one-third of the number of chargeable words in the text.

Urgent telegrams at three times the charge for an ordinary telegram may be sent to most countries in the world. To some countries, however, telegrams can only be sent as "urgent" over parts of the route. Such messages are called "Partially urgent".



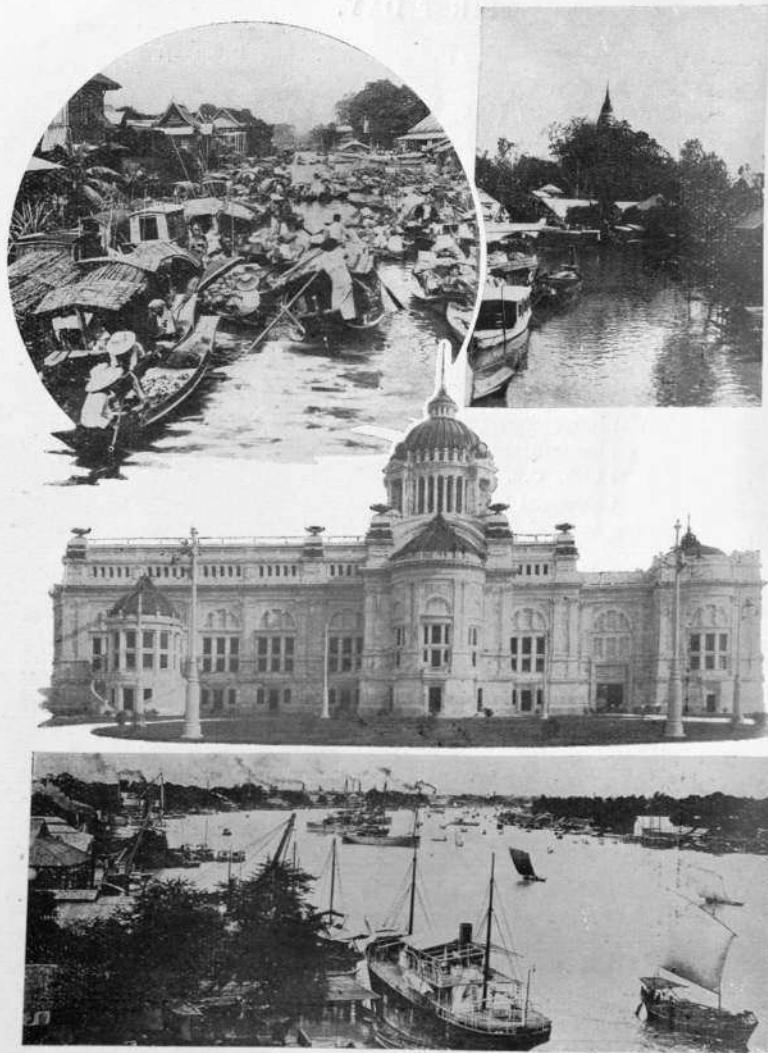
Phra Mongkol Bopit, Ayudhya.
The biggest Statue of its kind in the world.



(Plan of Bangkok should be consulted. Location of any place may be ascertained by the index number after place-name).



Almost the first question that the newly arrived visitor asks concerns the sights best worth seeing and inevitably he is advised to visit the more important temples, palaces and monuments. Of temples there are over three hundred in Bangkok and it is impossible for the visitor to do more than to visit a few of them. In later sections he will find helpful and informative notes concerning twenty-five palaces, temples, monuments and institutions which ought to be visited by tourists who wish to carry away a reasonably complete impression of Bangkok. Fairly to see all these places, however, demands about a fortnight of the tourist's time, and as many visitors will be unable to remain in Bangkok for that length of time it has been thought better to offer here a programme for a week's sight-seeing in Bangkok and the neighbourhood. The visitor who has two weeks to spare will, at the end of the first week, be sufficiently acquainted with the city to find his way about during the second week.



A floating market. The Throne Hall. The Golden Mount.
Bird's eye view of Chao Phya River.

FOURTH DAY.

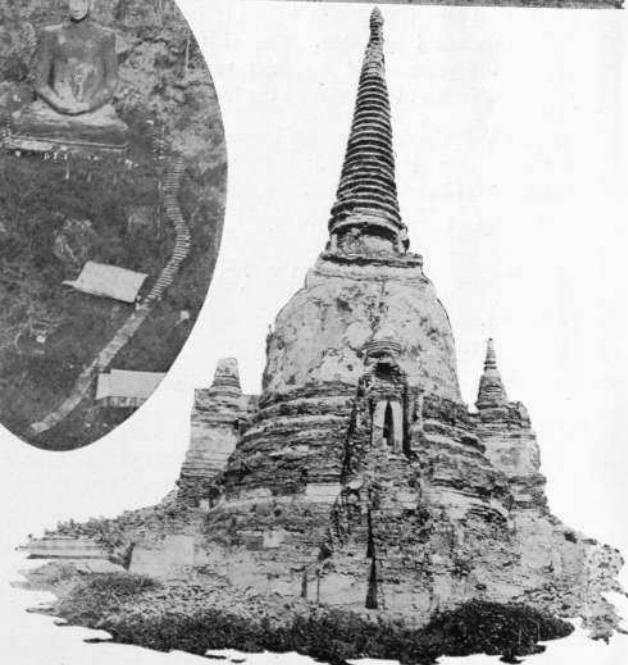
- Forenoon** Launch to Wat Kalaya. B.8.
Launch to Wat Arun. B7.
Launch along the lower part of the river i. e. around Bangkolem district.
- Afternoon** Sampeng (China Town of Bangkok). C7. D8.

FIFTH DAY.

- Forenoon** By launch along the "klongs" canals of Bangkok. See the floating market and river life.
- (This trip should be made in the early morning before seven o'clock if possible. The visitor will be much impressed with the presence of Buddhist monks collecting alms and with the crowds which gather at the floating market in the early morning.)
- Later in the forenoon** Visit the shopping districts and curio shops.
(See Chapter IV.)
- Afternoon** Wat Debsirindr. E7.
The University. F7, G8.

SIXTH DAY (To AYUDHYA).

- Forenoon** Leave Bangkok by the morning train at 7.15 o'clock.
Arrive Ayudhya at 9.04.
- Ayudhya is one of the most interesting of the older cities in Siam. The town itself is built on a number of islands in the Menam and there are more than a hundred ruined temples within the urban area. The principal one is the ruin of Wat Phra Srisanbej. The Museum and the Elephant Kraal are also worth seeing.
- (For details see Guide to Ayudhya published by the Royal State Railways of Siam and to be obtained at the Information Bureau.)
- Afternoon** Leave Ayudhya about twelve o'clock by steam launch stopping at Bang Pa In to visit His Majesty's summer Palace (Permission to view the palace must be obtained beforehand).
- Note.** Steam launch should be arranged for before leaving Bangkok. The Information Bureau can make arrangements for this trip in the most efficient manner.



Big bronze Buddha in Ayudhya.
Statue of Buddha near Lopburi.

Ruins of Wat Phra Srisanbej, Ayudhya.

SEVENTH DAY.

Forenoon Take a ride, in the early morning, in the crowded section of the city. Bangkok in the early morning is very picturesque.

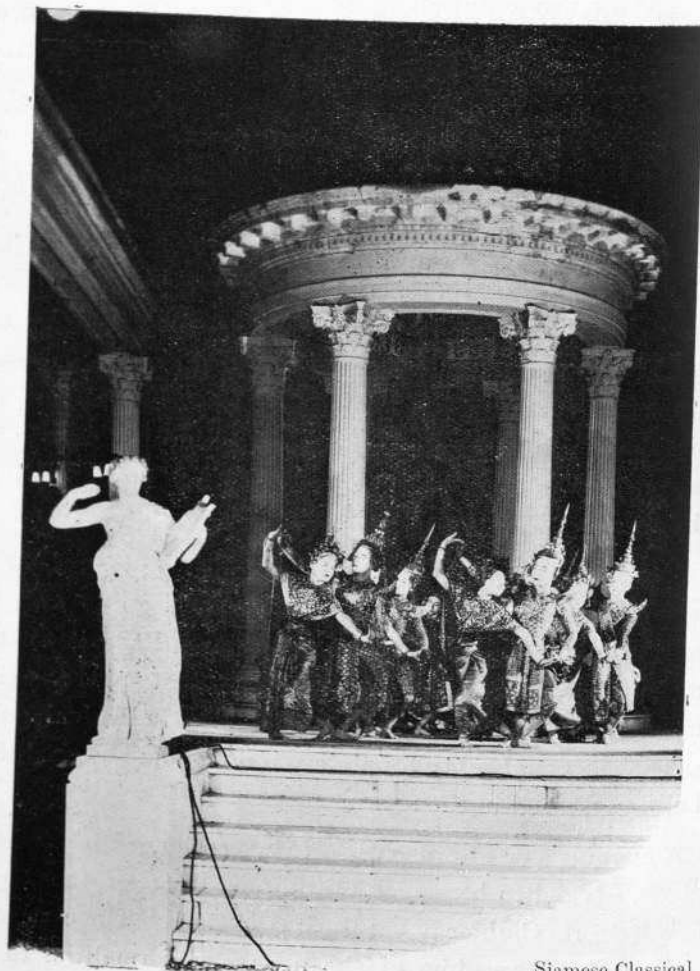
See His Majesty's elephants near to the Ministry of Justice (Wang Na). B6.

Afternoon Shopping.

Visitors who have more time on hand than a week for which we have briefly sketched out a programme are advised to visit such places as Nakon Patom, Lopburi and Petchaburi. Escorted tours to these places are often arranged by the Information Bureau. Literature can be obtained at the Bureau free of charge. For those who intend to stay in Siam for a considerable length of time, we recommend a trip to Chiangmai. This trip will give a complete idea of Siam as a whole.

If variety is wanted, and a day's shooting longed for to make a break in sight-seeing, the visitor should go to Sala Ya (Kms. 19) on the Southern Line or Klong Rangsit on the Northern Line. These are two of Bangkok's best snipe shooting grounds and are famous for bags obtained by individual guns. Records of fifty and sixty couple are common and a good shot will always do well in the season.

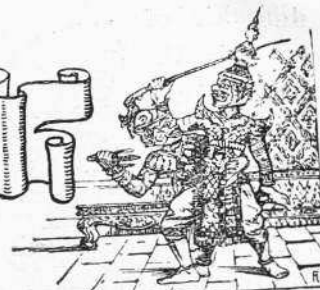
A morning's or afternoon's golf may be longed for and the visitor is advised to become a visiting member of the Royal Bangkok Sports Club or Royal Dusit Golf Club. The courteous officials will inform him of the necessary formalities to be observed. They are very simple indeed.



Siamese Classical
Dance on a gala
night

Roman Garden, Phya Thai Palace.

The Siamese Theatre



For list of theatres see page 62



The Siamese love song
and
is one
ancient
ed in-
the na-

there are several Siamese theatres in the capital the ancient forms of play Khon (masked pantomime), Rabam (dance in character) and Lakhon (opera ballet) are now seldom seen. The present day taste, at least of the inhabitants of the capital, tends more towards modern play acting; the pieces played are partly translations from European dramas and partly plays written by Siamese authors, the "mise en scène" being quite European. Notwithstanding the

and music,
the drama
of the most
and cherish-
stitutions of
tion. Though
es in the
called

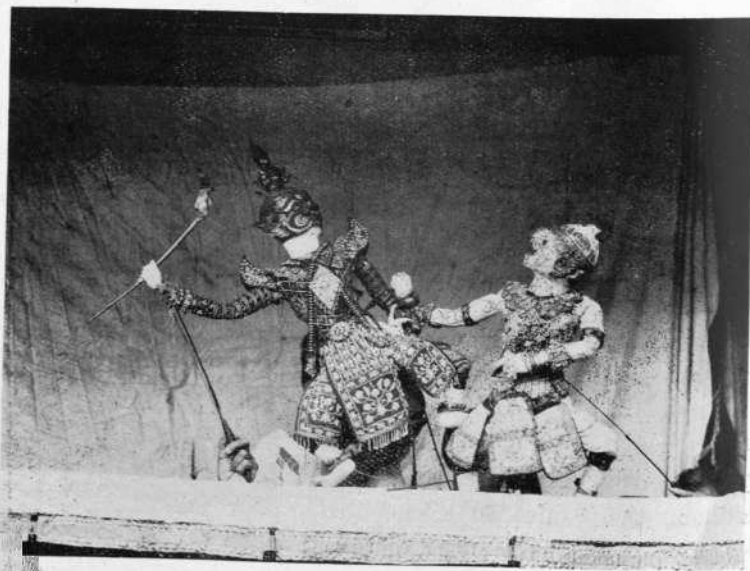


difficulties of to visit the charming worth seeing, the witnessed weather Royal public.



A character in the Ramayana.

the language, tourists are recommended Siamese theatre which possesses several and clever actresses well ing. The old drama is, however, more interesting and may be sometimes during the cold fair when a troupe of the Theatre appears before the All the different forms of the old drama are still kept alive at the court, as His Late Majesty was much interested in them, and supported a well trained and excellently equipped



Marionettes as shown in Siam.



A Modern Play.

Siamese theatre which carried on the traditions of the past in a most The actors of the classical Siamese generally women, though men may also the women, or rather girls, are trained early childhood and an immense amount is spent in training the body to the cult postures and undulations that the demands. The dance of the Siamese dress does not consist in skipping, tripping or pirouetting as in European dancing consists of writhing the arms the fingers turned back to the most, swaying and writhing body and advancing or retreating with gliding motions, all performed in the most

old time honoured splendid manner. theatre are take part; ed up from ount of time diffi- art act- ping but with utter- the



An actress performing a female part.



The Siamese Marionette.



A demon or Yaksha.

Sports Club and the Royal Turf Club, already mentioned in this guide. *The cold weather fair*, which usually takes place in January or February, is held in one of the three following Royal parks — Dusit, Chitr Ladā or Sarānrom, and is a kind of Tivoli, Lunapark or Coney Island only more aristocratic, and it is well worth visiting not once but several times. It lasts one week and is generally divided

into two parts, a popular and an aristocratic portion. In the former the Chinese dominate with their stalls, selling cheap toys, cakes and sweets. Besides this all sorts of popular amusements such as animal theatres, strong men, sorcerers, etc., are found here and the populace enjoys itself immensely. In the latter portion the stalls are nearly all kept by the ladies of high officials and well to-do people and many beautiful articles of Siamese and Chinese workmanship are sold. One may witness performances of classical Siamese plays, hear plenty of good music and see exhibitions displaying the progress of the National Red Cross movement and the Royal State Railways, dance in the large dancing hall, and utilise one of the many restaurants. Here the tourist will meet the whole "upper ten" of Siamese society and have an opportunity to admire the Siamese lady, who with her slender graceful figure, her wealth of dark tresses, black lustrous eyes and pearlwhite teeth ranks in charms and eleg-



A male character in the Siamese Lakon.

ance with any type of beauties of the world. The open air café life is almost unknown in Siam where the influence of home life is so very strong, but it may be added that there exists an amusement park called Suan Sanuk at Lumbini near to the Saladeng Railway Station. There during the afternoon hours light refreshments can be had and in the evenings especially on Wednesdays and Saturdays there are different kinds of entertainment.

LIST OF THEATRES.

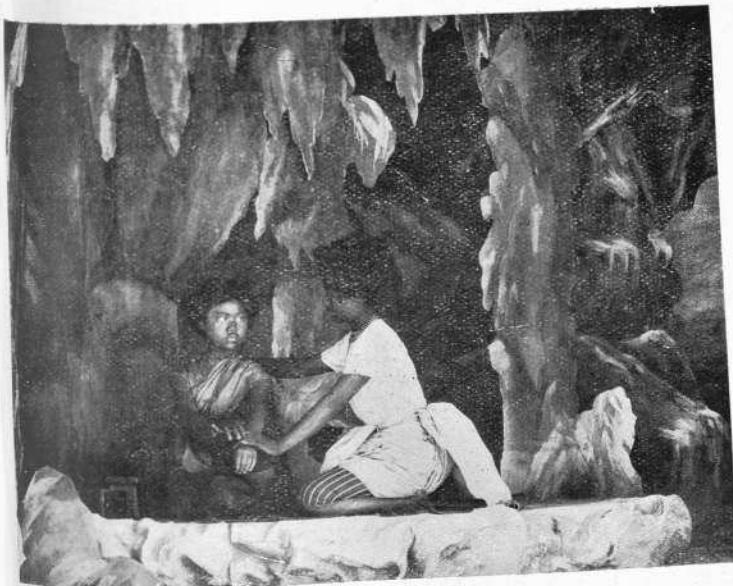
Classical Siamese theatres only appear occasionally. Tourists are advised to inquire as to the possibility of their appearances while in Bangkok.

Theatres having regular performances are listed below :

The Pathanakorn Cinema Hall ... New Road Near Plab
Pla Jai Road.



Marionettes Performing the Ramayana.



A modern drama.

The Queen's Cinema Hall	... New Road near Sam Yek.
The Hongkong Cinema Hall	... New Road near Sathorn Road.
The Sathorn Cinema Hall	... New Road near Sathorn Road.

The above four theatres are well patronized by Europeans. The Hongkong and Sathorn theatres are near to the European residential quarter and also to the hotels.

The Pathanakorn Theatre, however, is the largest of the three. The Queen's is smaller but a cosy one.

The prices of seats in these theatres run from 25 Satang up to 3 Baht.

Other smaller theatres are :

Nakon Kashem Theatre, Off New Road near to Chakravat
Road (Cinema).
Bang Lampu Theatre ... Bang Lampu (Cinema).
Nang Loeng Theatre ... Nang Loeng (Cinema).
Sri Athit Theatre ... Nang Loeng (Cinema).
Singapore Theatre ... New Road near Jawarad
Road (Cinema)



The Comedians.

Penang Theatre ... Bang Lampu (Cinema)

The regular programmes of these theatres are moving picture shows, and modern Siamese plays but sometimes on special occasions some other attractions are introduced. It is advisable to keep in touch with the changes of their programmes through newspapers, etc.

Chinese Theatres.

There are numerous Chinese Theatres in the China Town district. To visit any of these places, it is advisable to employ a guide.



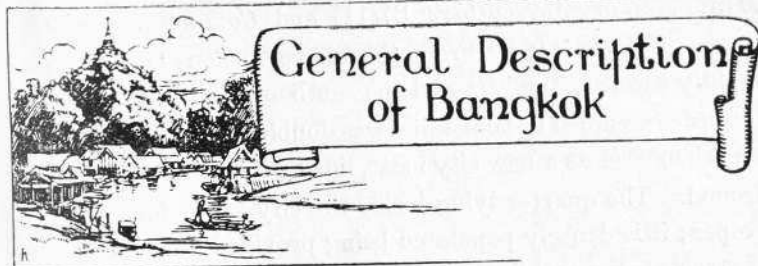
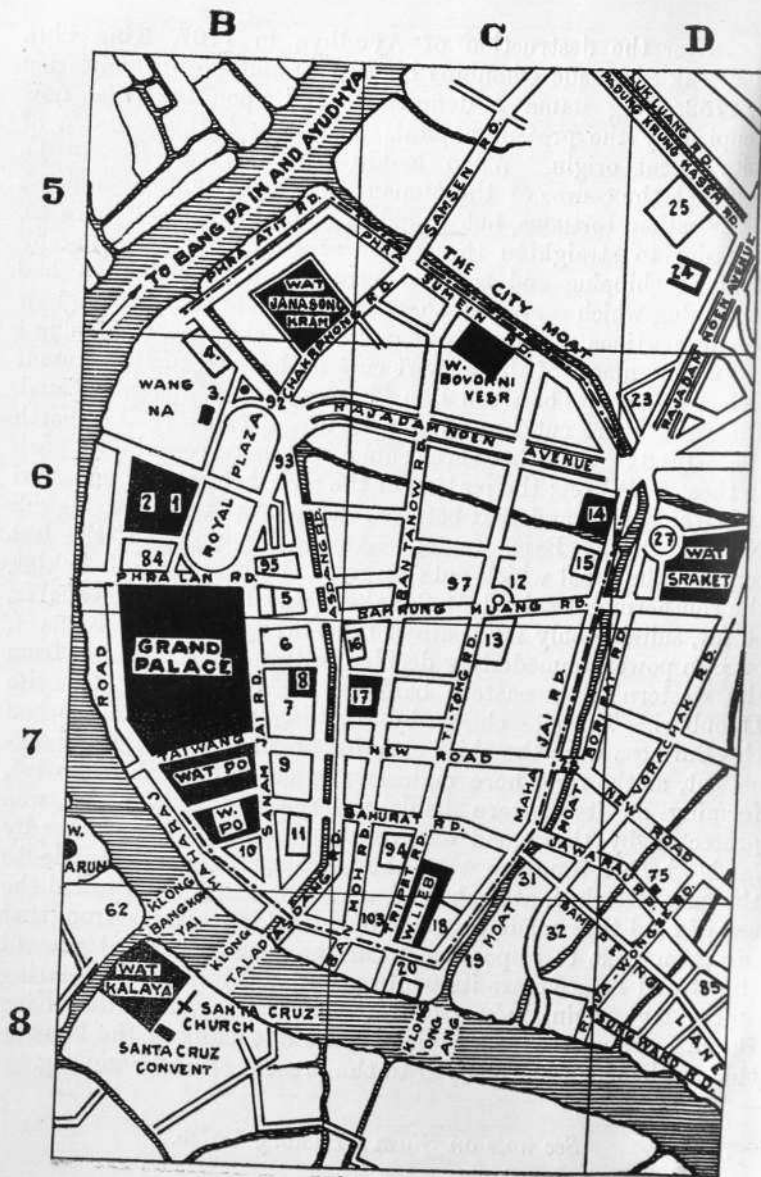
A Rabam. An evening performance.



Some fifteen hundred years ago, at the time when Lopburi had become the capital of a hinduized Mon Kingdom dominating the Menam Valley, the southern-most portion of this valley where the present Bangkok stands was still entirely beneath the waters of the Gulf. But little by little the continued raising of the bottom of the Gulf, combined with the accumulation of silt brought down by the great river and its many tributaries, succeeded in building up the fertile delta land which now stretches southwards from Ayudhya to the shores of the Gulf. This process of winning land from the sea is still going on and, if it continues on the same scale as hitherto, some fifteen hundred years hence Bangkok may become a distant inland town, as far away from the sea as Ayudhya now is. When Ayudhya was founded, in A.D. 1350, the place was a collection of mud banks inhabited by a few scattered fishermen and their families, but some 300 years later we see, on consulting the maps published by the travellers who visited Ayudhya in King Phra Narai's time, that there had sprung up a small town on the western bank of the Menam, at the place where at present the suburb of Dhonburi stands. A small brick fort had also been built there which, for a brief time during King Phra Narai's reign was garrisoned by French troops under the command of General des Farges. (This brick fort is still in existence, the space inside its walls now being occupied by the Royal Naval College).

After the destruction of Ayudhya in 1767, King Phra Chao Tak Sin made Dhonburi his capital and, on his abdication in 1782, King Rama I. definitely fixed upon the place now occupied by the present capital. Bangkok is thus a town of quite recent origin. When looking at the map it will be seen that the course of the Menam between Ayudhya and the sea is rather tortuous, but in olden days it was still more so. In order to straighten the course of the river and thereby facilitate shipping and trade, several kings of Ayudhya had canals dug which served as short cuts. These canals have now become portions of the present main river channel. The oldest and northernmost of these short cuts is the part of the present river bed that lies between Bân Phrao and the Chiengrak canal. This first short cut was dug by Phra Parama-Trailokanarth (1448-1488). The other three cuts are of more recent date, such as those at Pakret; the portion of the river between Nondhaburi and Wat Khema and that between the mouth of Klong Bangkok Noi and Klong Bang Luang. At the beginning of the last century, the canal which cuts through the peninsula of Paklat, the southernmost suburb of Bangkok, was dug, but this canal is, so far, suitable only for boats of light draught. King Rama I. once in power, immediately decided to transfer the capital from the western to the eastern bank of the Menam, just opposite Dhonburi. The site chosen by the king was, at a time when the Burmese were the chief enemies of Siam, strategically excellent, as the river here makes a big curve towards the west, forming on its eastern bank a large peninsula which was protected by the broad expanse of water against attacks by land, whether from the west, the north, or the south, while to the east stretched, at that time, a vast swampy plain called the sea of mud that made progress by attacking armies from that direction next to impossible. On the place where at present the Grand Palace rears its white castellated walls and glittering spires lay originally a Chinese settlement; but when King Rama I. transferred the capital to the left bank of the Menam, this settlement was removed to the present site of Sampeng.

See note on Siam "History" also.



The General Plan of Bangkok should be consulted.

AREA I. Within the City Wall.



Let us describe Bangkok, beginning with that area lying between the river and Klong Talad (see plan B8), occupied as it is by the *Grand Palace* B7, and *Wat Po* B7 the most extensive of all Bangkok temples lying to the south of the palace, and the many public buildings and temples lying to the north such as the *National Library* B6(1), *Wat Mahathat* B6(2) and the *Wang-na* B6,—the former Second King's palace,—the *Museum* B6(3) and the *Ministry of Justice* B6(4) which are all grouped around the broad *Royal Plaza* or *Sanam Phra Meru*, while the eastern strip of this area is occupied in order from north to south, by the huge building of the *Ministry of War* B6(5), the *Garden and Palace of Saranrom*—the Palace is now used by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs—B7(6)(7) with the small exquisite temple of *Wat Rajaprathit*, B7(8), the *General Staff Buildings* B7(9) and the

The index number after place name indicates where that place may be located on the plan.

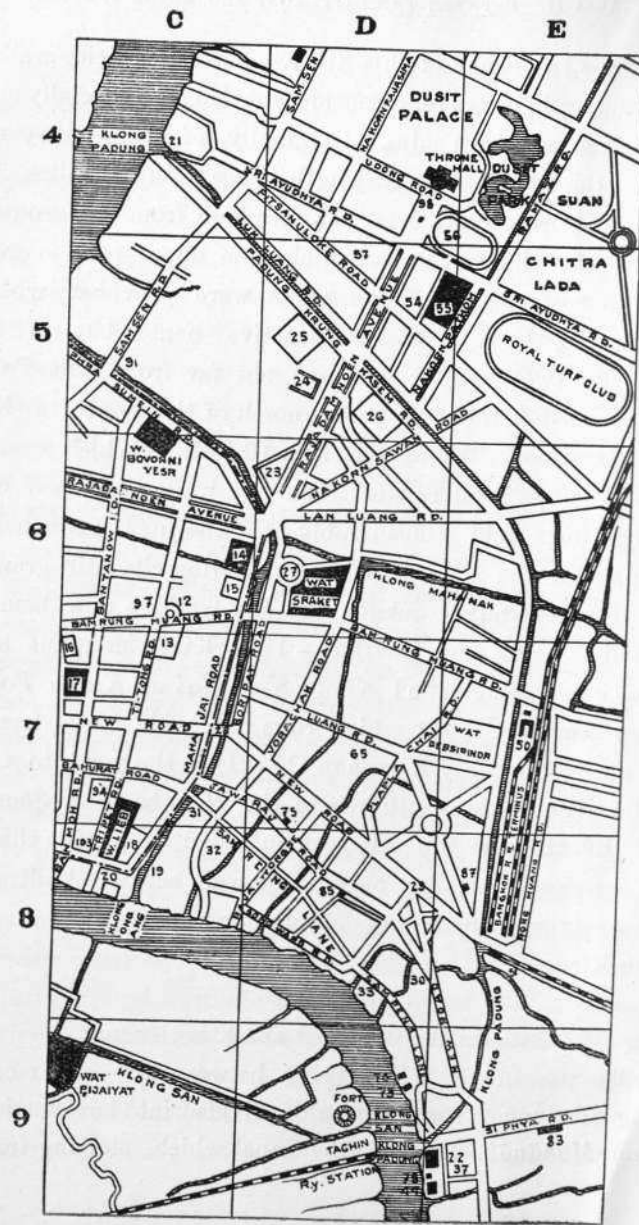
Ministries of Agriculture B7(11) and *Commerce and Communications* B7(12.) From the above nucleus the city grew rapidly towards the east and the south and the result was that the space occupied by the capital was doubled and *Klong Ong-Ang* was then used as a new city moat, lined with a thick city wall all around. The quarter lying inside the city walls forms the city proper; it is densely populated being provided with a net-work of streets. Several fine temples and public buildings of interest are situated here, such as *Wat Janasongkram* B5 and *Wat Bovoranivesr* C5, both lying in the northern part, through which also runs the broad and stately *Rajadamnoen Avenue*. Almost in the centre lies the square of the swing C6(12)—*Si Kak Sao Ching Cha*—and the beautiful *Wat Sudat* C7(13) while in the north-eastern corner are two more temples known respectively as *Wat Raja Nadda* C6(14) and *Wat Deba Thida* C6(15) both picturesque and interesting monuments. To the west of the square of the swing and standing on the eastern bank of the extension of *Klong Talad* is the Ministry of Interior C7(16) and near this is situated the beautiful temple called *Rajabopit* C7(17), with its tall chedi enclosed by a circular gallery. This temple is the residence of the Prince Patriarch of the Kingdom. Finally in the southern part of the city we have *Wat Lieb* C7, with its tall prang; near this temple is the plant and premises of the big *Siam Electric Corp., Ltd.* C8(18) which supplies the greater part of the capital as well as all its tramcars with electric light and current. In this part is also situated the *Ministry of Public Instruction*, C8(19), the *Post and Telegraph Office No. 1* C8(20), and the Memorial or Phra Buddha Yod Fa Bridge, erected, in commemoration of the 150th year of the Foundation of Bangkok, across the Menam Chao Phraya, to

connect the two banks of this River. Parts of the city walls are still standing, in places for a considerable length, especially on the eastern and northern sides. Originally, of course, they quite enclosed the city, their total length being about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles. They are built of brick and mortar, 12 feet high from the ground to the parapet and about 9 feet thick; the upper part is evenly set with "bai-sema." These walls were provided with 16 large gates, each has a distinctive name, but of these gates only two are now left, one not far from *Wat Po*, the other situated at the river to the north of the mouth of *Klong Talad Extension*. There were also 16 forts of which a number are still left in good repair. The city walls with their oldish looking forts add considerably to the picturesqueness of this part of the city. As the prospering city still grew and grew, ever extending outside the city walls, a new boundary line had to be set, and in 1851–1854 King Mongkut had a new city moat dug called *Klong Kut Mai* or *Klong Padung Krung Kasem* C4, D9 which runs in a wide curve from the river at *Wat Devaraj Kunchon* C4 (21) in the north to a point at the river in the south where the *Hongkong & Shanghai Bank* E9(22) now lies. It was intended to fortify this line with a series of forts but only a few were actually built and of these again only one is now left standing at the southern outlet of the *Klong*.

AREA II.

Between the City Moat and Klong Padung.

The part of the town lying between the city moat and *Klong Padung Krung Kasem* is divided into two portions by *Klong Mahānāk*, D6, E6 the canal which, starting from the



north-eastern corner of the city moat, runs nearly due east to Klong Padung Krung Kasem and after having crossed this latter continues its course eastwards through the *Srapratum* quarter until it reaches the eastern confines of the city. The northern portion is again divided into three districts by the *Samsen Road* C5 and *Rajadamnoen Avenue* D5, 6. The former starts at the north Extension of Klong Ong-Ang and runs northwards and nearly parallel to the river through the district called *Bang Khun Prom* and *Samsen* terminating at *Bangsue*, the northernmost suburb of the capital. The second thoroughfare, being a continuation of the avenue formerly mentioned, runs from the north-eastern corner of the city wall northwards and having crossed Klong Padung terminates in front of the *Throne Hall* D4. Between the *Samsen Road* and the river are situated several fine princely palaces and lining the *Rajadamnoen Avenue* are other important buildings such as the small and exquisite *Wat Parinayok* D6(23) and the big *Cadet School of the Army* D5(24). The space between the *Rajadamnoen Avenue* and *Klong Mahānāk* is cut through by several roads where many residences of princes and high noblemen are located; the populous district of *Nang Loeng* is also situated here. Finally on the banks of *Klong Padung Krung Kasem* in this portion of the town stand the big temples of *Wat Makut Krasat* D5(25) and *Wat Somanat* D5(26), both having a frontage of big shady trees. The southern portion is also divided into several densely populated districts, the principal roads running from west to east being in order from north to south; the *Bamrung Muang Road* D7: this road starts from a point at the extension of *Klong Talad* not far west from the square of the swing, passes this latter, crosses the city moat, passes *Pu Khao Thong* D6(27) and *Wat Sra Ket* D6. Continuing east it

next crosses Klong Padung and shortly after passes over the Northern Railway Line, from which point, under the name of *Rama I Road*, it runs through the Srapratum or Pratumwan District until it reaches the eastern confines of the town. In the corner formed by the city moat and Klong Mahānāk and thus situated a little to the north of the Bamrung Mueang Road rises the tall brick mount called *Pu Khao Thong* D6(27) or the Golden Mount which with its tree clad mass dominates the city, being one of the most conspicuous landmarks. Next comes *New Road* D7, which is the longest and the most important artery of communication of the town. It starts at a point near the river between the Grand Palace and Wat Po; passing over Klong Talad, it runs through the whole breadth of the city proper, then crosses the city moat at the point where formerly *Pratu Samyot* C7(28) or the three pointed gate stood, and from here runs in a curve towards the south-east, crossing Klong Padung, whereafter it continues south and south-west always keeping parallel to the course of the river until it finally ends at *Bangkolem* the southern-most district of the city on this bank of the Menam. At a point called *Samyak* D8(29) not far from the west bank of Klong Padung Krung Kasem, the New Road splits up into two branches, a southern as already mentioned and a south-eastern, the latter under the name of *Rama IV Road* crosses the Klong and follows the course of a long straight cut canal called *Klong Hualampong* or Klong Toei, and continues as far as the *Klong Toei Station* on the *Paknam Railway Line*. The space between Bamrung Muang Road and New Road is a very populous one being populated partly by Siamese, partly by Chinese, and is cut up

into several minor districts by the *Luang Road* D7 running from west to east and by the *Vorachakr Road* D7 and *Plaplachai Road* D7, the latter running roughly from north to south, besides a lot of smaller roads. Several temples are situated in this quarter but none are of special interest with the exception of *Wat Debsirindr* E7 which lies not far from the bridge where the Bamrung Muang Road crosses Klong Padung. At this temple is situated an important boys school whose buildings are constructed in a kind of Gothic style. The foremost Pali School of the Kingdom, one of the most important in the East, is also located here. We now come to the district which is bordered to the west by the city moat, to the south by the river, to the north by New Road and to the east by Klong Padung. This district is the most densely populated part of the whole city and is almost entirely inhabited by Chinese, a buzzing human beehive, a city, and a Chinese city at that, in the city itself. In fact when passing through its streets one seldom sees any Siamese at all but only the faces of the many different Chinese tribes and clans which populate southern China, such as Hylams, Hakka, Cantonese and Techiu; most of these people do not even understand Siamese. Here are most of the big Chinese trading concerns, and the majority of Chinese industries are centered here, such as the blacksmiths, carpenters, glassmakers, furniture makers and other trades; also numerous Chinese clubs which are the headquarters of many secret societies, now kept well in hand by the Police Authorities, and the hotels and theatres are found here. The chief artery running through this Chinese quarter which bears the name of *Sampeng* is the *Jawaraj Road* C7, a broad street starting at the city moat and terminating at a point at the New

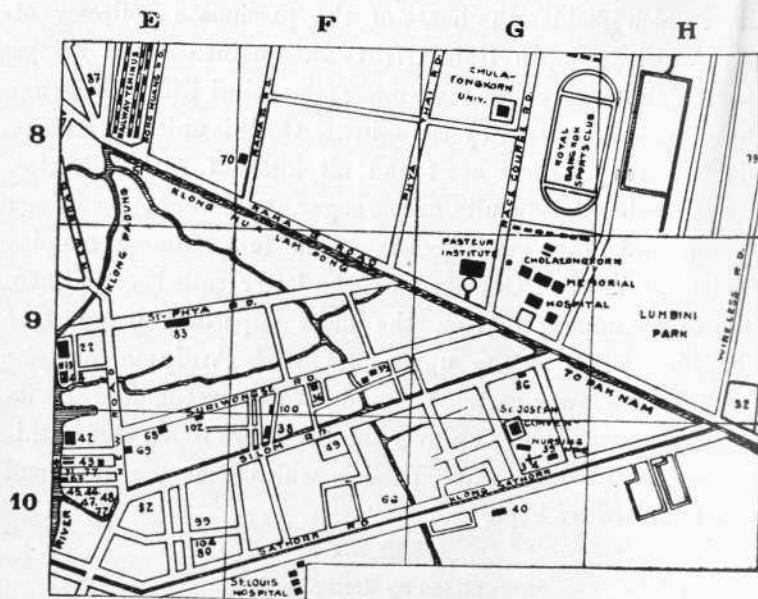
Road where *Wat Sam Chin* D8(30) lies. A maze of other streets and crooked lanes cross the Sampeng quarter in different directions, the most important next to Jawaraj Road being *Rajawongse Road* D8 which runs from the New Road to the river. In this street are located, besides the many big Chinese shops and warehouses, a good many Indian concerns. The riverside is lined with warehouses and Chinese godowns, and a whole fleet of junks coming from and going to far away Cathay. Small coasting craft and coast steamers are always busy loading and unloading their miscellaneous cargoes here. If a tour through this small China is interesting by daylight, it is still more so by night when the broad Jawaraj Road is brilliantly lighted up by tens of thousands of electric lamps, and the towering skyscraper-like Chinese hotels are ablaze with illumination. The traffic and the roar of human voices are hardly less by night than by day, the air being filled with the mysterious but not always equally sweet odours from the multitude of Chinese eating houses or the ambulant kitchens which line both sides of the street. Tourists who desire to taste a Chinese dinner may do so in any of the four or five big Chinese hotels located in this quarter; here the tourist will be able to enjoy swallows nest soup, roasted or boiled shark fins, many kinds of dishes consisting of roasted or fried pig skin and other such delicacies which make up the Chinese menu. Finally a visit to the narrow street which runs from Klong Ong-Ang to the Rajawongse Road is earnestly recommended, this visit to be made by daylight, because here lives a motley crowd of sellers of curios, mostly Chinese, in whose shops are exhibited silver and brass things, carved wood, silk embroideries and many more of those

things which gladden the heart of the passionate collector of art. A visit to Sapan Han, C7(31) the quaint covered bridge spanning the canal of the same name (also called Klong Ong-ang) must also not be missed by the tourist. On this unique structure with its thronged shops are found all kinds of real delicacies, such as fresh or fried fruits, cakes, sugar pasties and other things which appeal to the sweet tooth. Some few Siamese temples besides a number of Chinese ones, the latter called *Sān Chāo*, lie in the Sampeng quarter, the most important being *Wat Sāmplūm* C8(32) in the upper and *Wat Praduma Kongka* D8(33) in the lower part. The first is easily recognised by its tall grey prang soaring up over the flat house roofs, and in this temple is also found a small pond in which some crocodiles and huge tortoises are kept.

AREA III.

Surrounded by Klong Padung, The River, Klong Sathorn and Klong Hualampong.

We next come to the districts lying inside the triangle whose sides are formed to the west and north-west by Klong Padung E8, 9 and the river E10 and to the north-east by Klong Hualampong, its vertex lying at the railway Terminus E8, its base being made by *Klong Poh Yome or Sathorn* F10, G10. This district is cut through by several roads running roughly from west to east between New Road and Rama IV Road, namely, in order from north to south, *the Si Phya*, *the Suriwongse*, *the Silom or Windmill* and *the Sathorn Roads*. The last two run alongside canals of the same name. The upper part of this triangle is called *Bangrak*, the lower part *Sathorn* and here live the majority of the European residents.

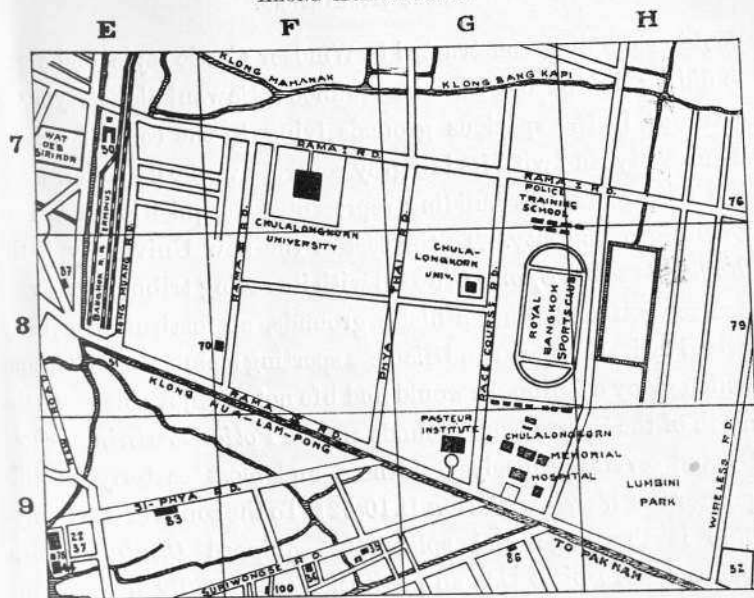


The roads are well kept and in part shady being lined on both sides by cosy cottages and bungalows each standing inside its own garden plot shaded by the foliage of the big trees or almost hidden behind a wealth of flowering shrubs and creepers, while every afternoon the fresh sea breeze makes life in this quarter more than bearable, in fact, quite enjoyable. In this latter quarter are the Protestant Churches such as *Christ Church* G10(34) and the *American Presbyterian Church* E10 (103), besides the big *French St. Louis Hospital*, F10 the *Nursing Home* G10 and the *Convent of St. Joseph* G.10 with its big school for girls. The *Legations of Holland, America* G10(40) and the *Consulate of Norway* are also situated here. The strip between the river and New Road, however, is by far the most

important one from the point of view of business, because here lie thronged together a great number of big European firms with their business premises, godowns and offices, three British, and a French bank, the *General Post Office*, the *Customs and Excise Department*, E10(42) besides the *French* E10(41) and *Portuguese* E9(44), *Legations* and *Consulates*. Almost hidden by the tall modern premises of the *East Asiatic Company* E.10(45) and the *Oriental Store*, E.10(46), in a small world by itself, we find the headquarters of the *Roman Catholic Mission* in Siam with its magnificent *Cathedral*, E10(47) the *Bishop's residence* and its grand school called the *Assumption College*, E10(48) the biggest and one of the very best schools in this country. The lower part of *New Road*, of course, represents the most busy portion of this interminable street on which a continuous stream of motor cars and lorries, horse carriages, rickshaws and clanging tramcars is flowing up and down from early morning till late at night. *New Road* cannot boast of any architectural beauty, most of its buildings lining both of the sides being plain or ugly two-storied brick houses without any saving features whatsoever. However, in spite of these obvious drawbacks, this noisy street through which, so to speak, throbs the life blood of the capital, is not without interest, especially for the new-comer. During a single drive through it one will look upon the faces of at least a dozen different races or nationalities. First of all there are the ubiquitous Chinese, who pulls the rickshaws and whose shops and workshops line the street; next come the Siamese, the upper class in their motorcars, those in more humble positions going by tram or rickshaw, or we see them as policemen,

soldiers or postmen; then there are the big turbaned and dignified Indians, tall straight Pathans, sarong-clad Malays, European-dressed Japanese with their womenfolk in kimono, small lithe Annamites, dark Javanese and so on, a real kaleidoscopic picture of a multitude of races and dresses which by their variety and colour do much to enliven the drabness of this unlovely street. The lower part of the ground lying between New Road and the river is, down through its whole length to the Bangkolem point, occupied by a long row of Chinese rice mills, busy wharves, big up-to-date workshops, docks or sawmills belonging to sundry European firms, while on the bosom of the river a fleet of big steamers is always loading or unloading miscellaneous cargoes from or into this part of the river which is the real port of Bangkok.

In the very heart of this teeming quarter is found a small and peaceful plot of land at Ban Mai, the garden of the dead. This is the Protestant Cemetery. Very striking is the contrast between the tumultuous life that flows around and hard by it and the peace and restfulness of this garden of those for whom there is no more tumult and turmoil. There are two Catholic cemeteries in Bangkok, one situated in the Windmill Road, the other in Samsen, Bangkok's northern suburb, but these are found amid surroundings less noisy.



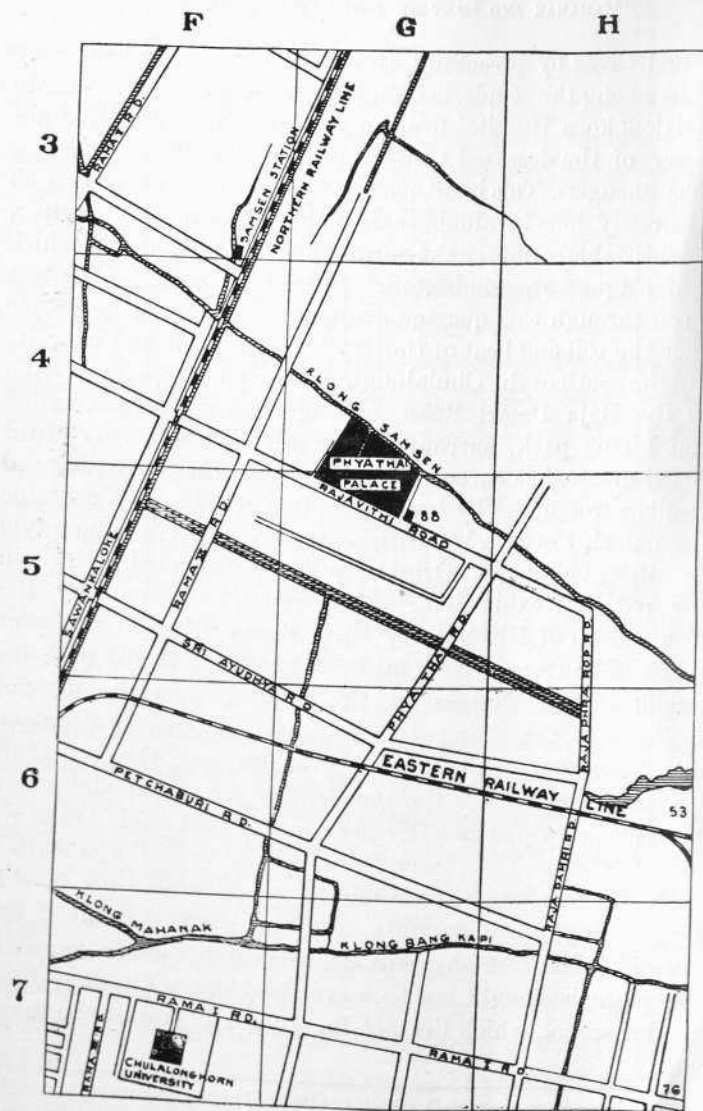
AREA IV.
South of Klong Mahanak, Klong Bang Kapi and North of Klong
Hualampong.

The Quarter lying between Klong Hualampong to the south and Klong Mahanak and Klong Bang Kapi to the north is, with the exception of its western part, sparsely populated. In the corner formed by Klong Padung Krung Kasem and Klong Hualampong stands the imposing Railway Terminus E7,8 with its arched roof; nearby is also the goods yard and the extensive buildings and offices where the Administration of the Royal State Railways is located E7(50). Opposite the Railway Terminus on the bank of Klong Hualampong lies the unassuming Paknam Railway Station E8(51), from which runs a line alongside the Hualampong canal southwards terminating at *Paknam* or *Samud Prakan*, a small town situated at the very mouth of the Menam Chao Phya. In this quarter lies also the *University* F7,8, comprising an oldish

looking building constructed in Windsor Castle style, and a new building, in the old Siamese Sukhodai-Sawankaloke style G8, situated in the spacious grounds lying to the east of the old University, and with its tall grey concrete walls, its galleries and red tiled roofs, this building represents an acquisition of real art to the growing city. To the east of the new University is the *Royal Bangkok Sports Club* G8 with its racing tribune, vast race course, golf and other athletic grounds, an institution equally prized by its European and Siamese sporting members and without which many a European would find life not so enjoyable! To the north of the Sports Club grounds are the *Police Training School* G7 and several princely residences, and most easterly in this quarter the *Wireless Station* H.10(52). To the south of the Sports Club is the huge and splendidly equipped *Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital* G.9, an institution which fully deserves its name as one of the three foremost hospitals in Eastern Asia. This Hospital is also the headquarters of the *Siamese National Red Cross*, an institution which from the point of view of the ardent enthusiasm with which it is supported by all classes of the people, its serious progressive work and the beneficent results which follow there-from, bears comparison with any other similar organization whether in Europe or America. This splendid hospital has been built entirely by voluntary gifts, the nucleus of the buildings being built by the children of the late King Chulalongkorn in loving memory of their august Father, and it is constantly being added to by new buildings raised by grandiose gifts either by princes or by rich commoners. A very competent staff of European and Siamese doctors and nurses is attached to this institution which grows from year to year and the influence

of the Red Cross by preaching and organizing better sanitary conditions among the people, is being felt more and more. Near to the Chulalongkorn Hospital lies the *Pasteur Institute* G9, built in memory of the deceased Queen Mother, Her Majesty Queen Saovabha Bhongsri. This institution is up-to-date in every branch and has already done invaluable service in preparing the smallpox vaccine, anti-rabic serum, snake-serum and other serums by which a host of plagues are combatted.* The long and shady roads which run through this quarter are much frequented by people who after the toil and heat of the day seek fresh air and exercise here. To the south of the Chulalongkorn Hospital separated from this by the Raja Damri Road, extends the vast park called Lumbini. This park, surrounded on all four sides by broad waterfilled moats, has three entrances, recognizable by their red brick walls surmounted by bronze elephants. The park contains a Chinese clock tower, a beautiful sala in pure Siamese style besides other buildings. Originally it was intended to contain a grand national exhibition, which came to naught by the premature death of His Majesty King Rama VI. In the near future it will be transformed into a large amusement park for the benefit of the citizens of the capital. In the district called *Bang Kapi*, lying to the east of the Pratumwan District, is another institution of great interest, the big Girls College called the *Watana Vidhya Academy*, a real model school which will long keep in memory the name of that noble American woman Miss Edna Cole, who some forty years ago started national girls teaching on sound and progressive lines in this country. Many are her pupils, of whom a great number are already old ladies in high positions, and all bless her memory. American tourists ought not to leave Bangkok without visiting this model school, which lies not far from the end of the Rama I Road.

* The interesting snake park which is attached to the Institute, and which has its only counterpart in Brazil, is well worth a visit.



AREA V.

The Phya Thai District.

North of Klong Mahanak and East of the Railway Line.

To the north of Klong Mahanak and Klong Bang Kapi and east of the Northern Railway Line stretches the *Phya Thai District*. At the northern edge stands the Phya Thai Palace, which is being utilised as a hotel under the management of the Royal State Railways (see Section on Accommodation). It may be noted here that a short distance to the north of Klong Mahanak the Eastern Railway Line branches off from the Northern Line. The Eastern Line, ends at the Franco-Siamese border, from which point the famous ruins of Angkor may easily be reached by motor car. From the Eastern Line another line branches off south at *Makasan* H.6(53) where the big railway workshops are situated, and runs to the bank of the Menam where a big goods yard has been constructed.

AREA VI.

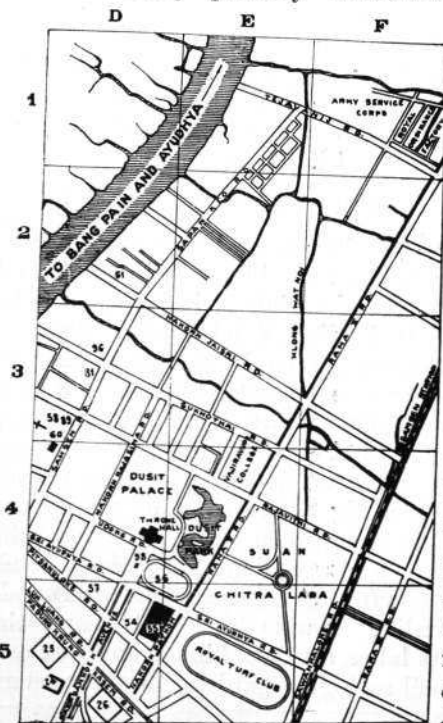
The Dusit Quarter and the Samsen District.

The Dusit Quarter lies west of the Phya Thai District and is separated from the latter by the high embankment of the Northern Railway Line. It is divided into three parts, an eastern, a central and a western portion by the Rama V Road E4 and the Rajadamnoen Avenue D5. In the first lies the *Royal Turf Club*, E5, favourite resort on racing days for the sports loving population of the capital; to the north of the Turf Club stretches the vast grounds of the *Suan Chitralada Rahotarn*,* E.4, a big park-like space surrounded by roads, moats and an iron-grated enclosure. In the central portion are some military barracks, the *Royal Theatre* D5(54), the wonderful *Benchama Bopitr Temple* D5(55) a jewel in dazzling marble and gold, and the *Dusit Park*† itself with its lakes, artificial hills, many rare and beautiful trees and its small zoological garden; in the western

* There is a royal golf course in Suan Chitralada.

† "Dusit" comes from Tusita, i. e., the fourth heaven where the future Buddha awaits the time when he shall be born on earth.

portion lie inside its castellated walls, the *Paruskawan Palace* D5 (57). The Rajadamnoen Ave. terminates in a broad square in front of the white marble *Throne Hall*, D4; in the middle of the square stands the imposing *Equestrian Statue of His Majesty King Rama V.* D4 (98). To the north of the Dusit Park is the *Vajiravudh College*, a collection of fine picturesque buildings constructed in Siamese temple style. Between the Dusit Quarter and the river is the *Samsen District* with its many princely residences and gardens of swaying



palms, durian and mango trees. The Samsen District contains a big *Catholic Annamite Settlement* grouped round two churches and the *School of St. Gabriel* D3 (60). In this district is also the *Government Power Station* D2(61), which supplies the northern part of the capital with electric light and power. Farther north is finally *Bangsue* with its many military barracks and its *Royal Ordnance Factory* F1, the Bangkok Cement Works being the northernmost point which one can reach by motor car.

The West Bank.

The West Bank of the Menam, though rather densely populated along its banks, has few roads, most of the traffic being by boat through the network of klongs with which the hinterland of this district is intersected. The land stretching behind and away from the river bank is in fact one huge garden with many kinds of fruit trees, a delightfully idyllic district to roam about in. The population is mostly pure Thai, the so called garden Thai, old fashioned people but hospitable and kind. The only part of the western bank which deserves the name of a town is of course *Dhonburi*, King Phra Chao Tak Sin's capital which lies just opposite the city, confined to the north by *Klong Bangkok Noi* A.5 and to the south by *Klong San* D9. At the mouth of this latter klong lies an old brick fort. Going up stream from this place we pass successively the old settlement of *Santa Cruz* B8, where the descendants of the Portuguese adventurers who entered Siam during the beginning of the 16th century live. Next we pass the beautiful *Wat Kalaya* B.8 with its tall roofs; thereafter situated at the mouth of *Klong Bangkok Yai* B.8 comes King Tak Sin's old palace, to-day occupied by the *Royal Naval College* B8(62), and then the slender and graceful prangs of *Wat Arun* A.7, the *Ministry of Marine* A7(63) with its workshops and dock, *Wat Rakhang* A.6(64) with its white prang, and finally the *Railway Station* A5 lying at the mouth of *Klong Bangkok Noi*. Not far south of Klong San is the *Ta Chin Railway Station* D.9. From this station a line runs south-west to the important fishing place called *Mahachai* or *Tachin*, at the mouth of the *Supan River*. This line is continued on the other side of the river, running westwards to its terminus at *Samud Songkram*, a town lying at the mouth of the *Meklong River*. Another small railway or rather tramway starts from the river bank at a point opposite the Northern outlet of the Klong Padung Krung Kasem. This line runs inland and northwards in a big curve through a land of gardens ending at a point on the river bank opposite the small town of *Nondaburi*, but as the timetable for this latter line is not always strictly adhered to tourists are not recommended to take trips along it.

The Southern Suburb.

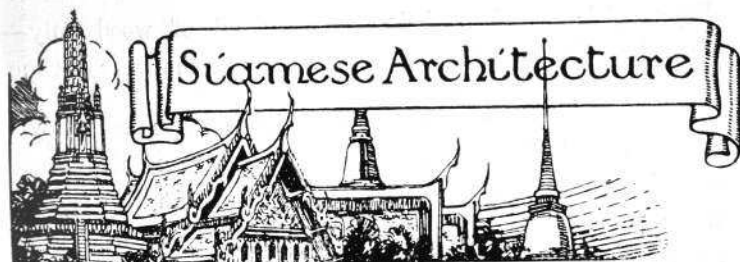
The southernmost suburb of the capital, if it can be called so, is *Paklat* or under its official name *Phra Pradaeng*. It lies inside a big curve which the river here makes towards the east, a short cut goes from the upper to the lower part of the river bend and it is from this canal that the small town has got its popular name "*Paklat*". *Paklat* is mostly inhabited by Mon or *Taliang* who came over during the beginning of the last century from their old homes in Burma, being no longer able to endure the ruthless and cruel tyranny of the Burmese oppressors. The Mons are more dark skinned than the Siamese. They are devout Buddhists and their by no means big settlement abounds in finely built and well kept temples, the Mon *phra chedi* being easily recognizable by the spires which are crowned with golden umbrellas. *Paklat* was formerly a strong fortress and together with the now completely erased *Nakon Khuan Khan* on the eastern bank of the river, it acted as a barrier against would-be hostile fleets attacking the capital from the sea. Just opposite the small town of *Paklat* are still seen the walls of one of the old forts erected during the third reign but no gun now mounts its walls. Instead of a place of war it has become the haven of rest for many of those most unfortunate among the dwellers on earth, the lepers. This *Leper Asylum* is of quite recent date and its origin is due in a great measure to the generous assistance of the Rockefeller Institute, an institution which, in close co-operation with the Siamese Red Cross, the Sanitary Department and the Ministry of Public Instruction, has rendered this country most valuable services of a humanitarian kind. We may now finally mention the small town of *Samud Prakan* or as it is usually called *Paknam* (literally "the mouth of the water," i. e., the river) which stands on the eastern bank at the

very mouth of the River Chao Phraya, being the first Siamese town the traveller sees when arriving by sea. *Paknam* is only a small fishing place, something like what Bangkok was only a couple of hundred years ago. A small electric railway connects the town with the capital which can be reached in an hour. In olden days *Paknam* was protected by a brick fort long ago razed to the ground, but now on the western bank of the river lies the more modern fort called *Chula Chom Klao*. It was here that a fight took place in July 1893 when a small French Squadron forced the river entrance. At *Paknam* there takes place a big annual feast at the beginning of November when thousands of Bangkok people go by rail or boat on a pilgrimage to the *Phra Chedi Klang Nam*, the beautiful *chedi* and temple lying on a small artificial island in the river a little above *Paknam*. During this festival much merit making takes place, and there is plenty of fun especially with the boat and canoe races.

Bangkok in the Future.

In future when the road from Bangkok reaches *Paknam*, this place will become another suburb of the capital as the new road will be quickly lined with houses and residences of those people who seek to get away from the capital out to the cool breezes of the sea. In the past from the days of the first reign up to the seventies of the last century, the capital was practically without roads, with the exception of those in the neighbourhood of the palace and during that long period the numerous canals were the real arteries of communication and nearly all traffic was made by boat. Most of the spaces now occupied by streets and houses were then garden lands and with the exception of the closely packed Chinese quarter

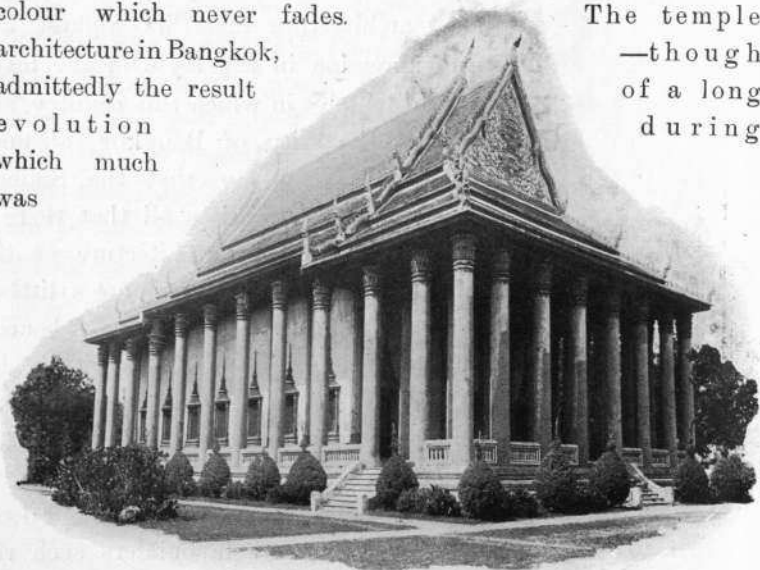
of Sampeng, only the banks of the klongs and of the big river were lined with houses, most of which were built of wood on piles driven down in the soft mud of the river banks and standing partly in the water, their roofs being thatched with attaps. On the river itself a great part of the population lived and died either in floating houses or in sampans. It was therefore no exaggeration when writers called the Bangkok, of those days, the "Venice of the East". Now alas! the picturesque floating houses have nearly all disappeared, only here and there a few of them are still seen clinging to the river banks soon to disappear entirely. From 1880 and onwards road building has progressed continually and roads now reach the furthest confines of the capital proper. The vast airy and beautiful quarter situated to the north and north-east of the old city was laid out according to the plans of King Rama V. This is the quarter where now lies the Throne Hall and the Dusit Park and where the beautiful Rajadamnoen Boulevard stretches its long and shady course. The city is, however, not growing so much to the north as to the east and south-east where big plans for settlement and road making are now maturing. The future will see Bangkok as a vast well laid out, park-like town intersected with a network of broad shady roads running in all directions and it will then have become much more even than now "the city of great distances", by which name it is already known.



Siamese architecture finds its highest and finest expression in the style of the many beautiful temples in which this country, and especially the City of Bangkok, abounds. Indeed one may say that the Siamese temple in itself comprises all that there is to be said about the architecture of this country—which by the way is not a little—because in Siam, as in the neighbouring countries, the genius of its architects has centred in the construction of the great and imposing buildings that are consecrated for religious purposes. Further, while these buildings were made of solid materials such as stone or bricks which have helped them to withstand decay down to our time, besides giving their builders such rich opportunities for displaying their art, the houses of the people, right up to those of the nobility, were built only of the more perishable and flimsy materials, wood and straw—even the

Royal Palaces often being constructed of wood only—and therefore have not been able to withstand the wear of time.

The few stone-built palaces resemble very much in style the temples, are in fact often identical with these, at least when seen from the exterior, a fact which is really not so astonishing when the almost divine cult and honours which were given to the supreme rulers of this kingdom are taken into consideration. The temples are the chief attraction of Siam, and especially of Bangkok, and with their dazzling walls, glittering tiled roofs, gilt carvings and flashing spires they leave on the mind of the visitor an impression of beauty and colour which never fades. The temple architecture in Bangkok, though admittedly the result of a long evolution which much was



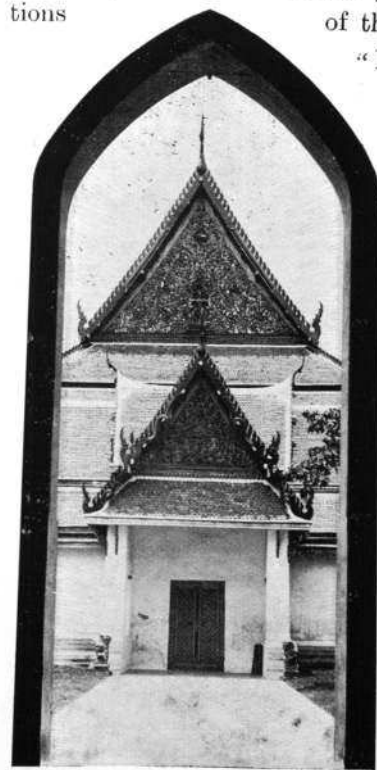
A bôt,
Wat Debsirindr.

adopted from the predecessors of the Thai—the Cambodians bequeathing their tower or prang and the Mon the chetiya or stupa—still contains so many elements which must be considered as direct results of an independent Siamese evolution, among these latter being the wonderful roofs, that one is quite justified in speaking about a special Siamese style. The adaptations and modifications of the art of the predecessors of the Thai have, together with the innovations created by the genius Thai proper, resulted in a style of particular charm and elegance which, especially when viewed from a distance, often gives a dazzling effect. The Siamese temple—properly called a Wat—consists generally of several temple buildings together with a convent or cloister in which the yellow robed monks spend their lives in quiet study and meditation. The buildings used for religious purposes are mainly of two kinds, i.e., the ubosoth or bôt, the chapel in which laymen are ordained as monks, and the vihara (pronounced as vihān) or preaching hall. Besides these principal buildings a temple may contain one or several chetiya



Window of the bôt in
Wat Rajabopit.

(pronounced as chedi) or relic shrines; prangs, i. e., the modified Cambodian tower, a belfry, a library and smaller buildings such as those for sheltering images of the Buddha and resthouses for the visitors or the faithful who come to perform their devotions. The principal building is the bôt, in which alone laymen may be ordained and admitted into the Holy Brotherhood of the Yellow Robe—the Sangka. This building is easily recognized by reason of its being surrounded by eight boundary stones planted in the eight chief directions of the compass; these stones are called



Gables of a bôt, Wat Mahathad.

“Patta sema” and resemble the leaves of the bodhi tree, the sacred fig tree under whose shade Gautama obtained Buddhahood. The bôt is rectangular in shape and generally opens to the east, its lofty walls being pierced by rows of windows. Colonnades of tall square-formed pillars, sometimes terminating in capitals shaped as lotus flowers, often surround the building and support the projecting eaves of the roof. This latter is the most characteristic portion of the Siamese temple and forms its chief attraction, being of a particularly graceful

and picturesque design. It is constructed of heavy timber covered with varnished tiles of red, blue or green colour often arranged in various handsome patterns besides being built in several tiers like so many superimposed roofs, a manner of construction which powerfully adds to the heaven-aspiring aspects of these roofs. The ends of the roof are framed with long carved and inlaid rafters, called cho fâ, shaped as the crested bodies of naga or serpents, the heads turning towards the lower part of the roof and the tails ending at the ridge of the roof in the characteristic form of a Siamese horn. The cho fâ are encrusted with mosaics of gilt glass which, when struck by the rays of the sun, sparkle and emit flashes like lightning when seen from far away. The

origin of this kind of ornamentation, i. e. the snake motive,

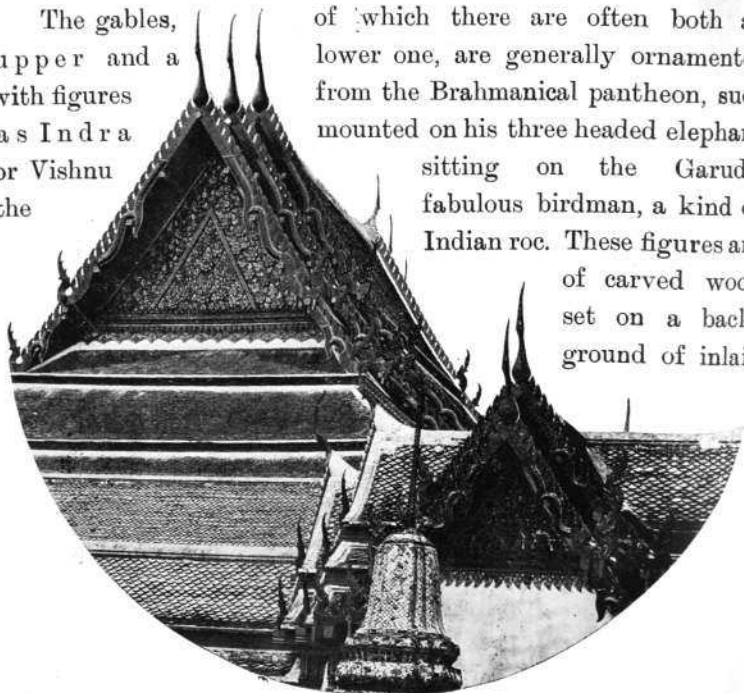


A bôt,
Wat Benchamabopitr.

which is also found in the old Cambodian temples, is perhaps to be sought as far back as in that early stone age civilisation called the neolithic culture which, some twenty thousand years ago, must have spread from a centre in Central Asia to Europe, Africa and America and in which the cult of the snake, the Swastika, and the sun were conspicuous landmarks. But people acquainted with the old nordic art with its snake motives, and who have seen the few remaining stave Kirks in Norway, will also not fail to draw *their* conclusions.

The gables, upper and a with figures as Indra or Vishnu the

of which there are often both an lower one, are generally ornamented from the Brahmanical pantheon, such mounted on his three headed elephant sitting on the Garuda, fabulous birdman, a kind of Indian roc. These figures are of carved wood set on a background of inlaid



Roof of a bôt, Wat Po.



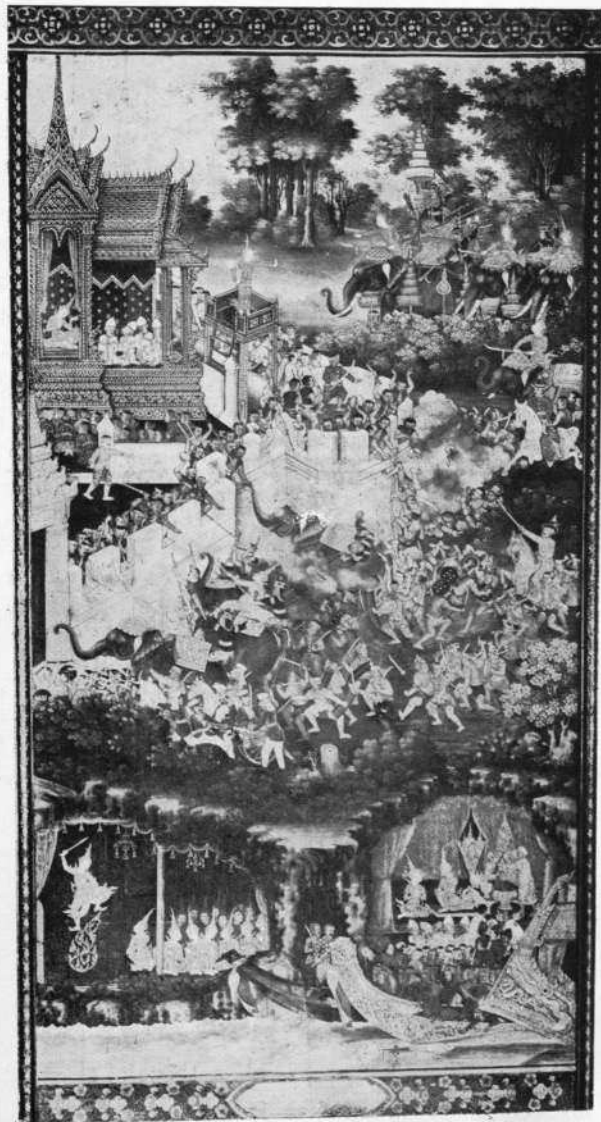
Interior of a bôt.

decorated with paintings of Indian gods or angels. The interior of the bôt forms a vast and lofty hall, divided into a central nave and two smaller side aisles by two rows of tall square formed pillars which support the red painted and gilt ceiling. In the background of the nave, facing east, there sits on a kind of tall altar a huge gilt statue of the Buddha which with its blissful countenance and sublime serenity completely dominates the vast room. The image of Buddha is sometimes surrounded by images of several of his chief disciples, preferably those of his two most eminent companions—Sariputra and

glass patterns and their effect is often striking. The doors, each door generally made of one huge slab of teakwood, are richly carved and gilt or inlaid with beautiful designs in mother of pearl representing mythological beings or scenes from the famous epic of Ramayana, the Indian Iliad. The window shutters are also richly carved and gilt, their inner sides sometimes being



A belfry.



Wall painting, Wat Arun.

Mogallana. In front of the altars, which are often richly decorated and in some cases contain the bones of kings or venerated religious teachers, are placed gilt candlesticks and flower vases; in the middle of the floor stands the low chair in which the abbot sits when preaching to the people. These chairs are often beautiful pieces of art and are adorned with carved ivory. In many of the principal temples—such as for instance, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Wat Po, Wat Sudat, Wat Arun and Wat Sraket, to take only a few—the walls are decorated with elaborate paintings illustrating the life of Gautama Buddha or his former existences, scenes from the Brahmanical heavens or of the torments in hell or of other subjects belonging to the Buddhist cosmology or theology. Tourists who have visited the Buddhist temples of Japan will agree that though these are often built in the midst of natural scenery of surpassing beauty such as is not to be found in Bangkok or Lower Siam, still they cannot—by reason of their emptiness—be compared with the Siamese temples, which are, so to say, impregnated with the calming and yet living presence of the illustrious Teacher as manifested in his dominating images placed therein. The *bôt* or the *vihara*, or sometimes both of these buildings (which are often identical in appearance) may be enclosed by a single or double square of galleries which, being closed to the exterior, open up towards the interior courtyard in which stand the temple buildings proper. The four faces of these galleries are pierced with gates, which, as in the case of Wat Phra Keo, may be guarded by colossal statues of demons, the doors of the gates

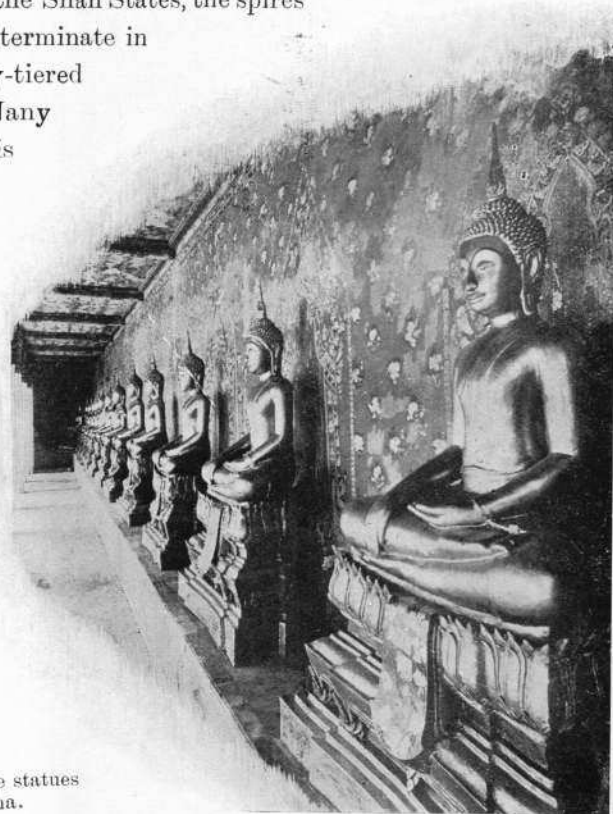
being either carved or painted with representations of angels or ogres. In the long and sombre corridors of the galleries are placed rows of sitting or standing images of the Buddha which may number, as in the case of Wat Po, as many as 394. The gallery is no doubt directly adopted from the Khmer, who in the wonderful Angkor Wat have produced the most sublime example to be found of this kind of architecture. After the bôt and the vihara the most dominating features of the Siamese temple are the stupa or chedi and the prang. The phra chedi, or the relic shrine, was originally a monument raised over relics of Buddha and some of his most important disciples. Some of the present monuments of this type are now used for the resting place of the ashes or bones of greater



Entrance, Wat Po.

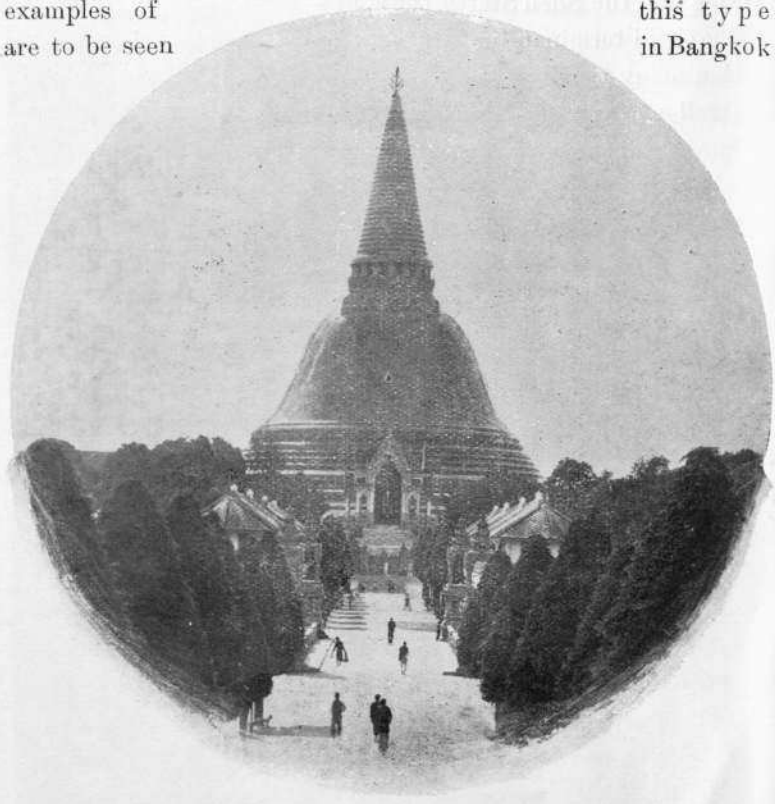
deceased venerated persons. The majority, however, do not contain anything at all but are simply erected as memorials of Buddha and his teachings. In its original form this chedi or stupa—which in Ceylon is called a dagoba, by Europeans corrupted into pagoda,—affected a round shape somewhat like a reversed alms bowl and was, as excavations in North-West India have shown, often crowned with a five- or - seven tiered umbrella. Then in course of time this

kind of monument developed into the bell-shaped dome and slender graceful spire of the chedi of present day Burma and Siam. Sometimes the chedis are provided with small niches in the sides in which sit or stand images of Buddha; in some cases, the bell shaped part is raised on a terrace or on a square substructure, the latter type being found in north Siam where also, as in Burma and the Shan States, the spires of the chedi terminate in golden many-tiered umbrellas. Many of the chedis attain



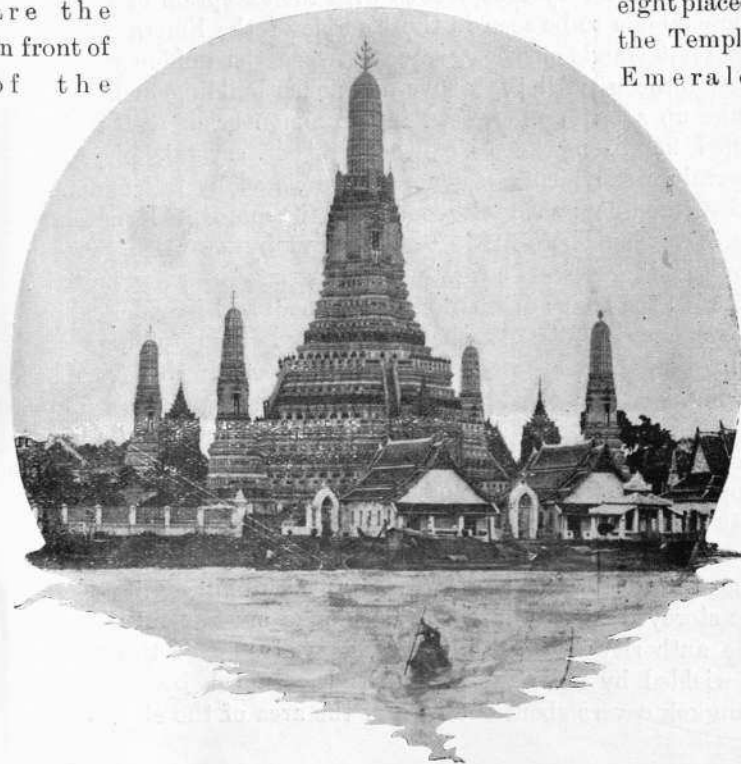
A gallery of the statues of Buddha.

considerable size as, for instance the one in Nakon Patom which rises to a height of about 115 metres, being the biggest of its kind in Siam. The chedi found in Bangkok are not of very great dimensions, the biggest one being the golden chedi, inside the Temple of the Emerald Buddha precincts in the grand palace. In some cases they are surrounded by circular galleries interrupted by vihara in the four chief directions; examples of this type are to be seen in Bangkok



A Chedi, Nakon Patom.

at Wat Rajabopit and in the great chedi at Nakon Patom. We next come to the prang which is entirely different from the phra chedi, being in fact a Siamese adaptation of the Cambodian tower, its top being crowned like the latter with the trident of Shiva. Most of these monuments are of massive construction, having niches on the four sides where images of the Buddha or devatas (angels) are placed. In some few of them only there is found a narrow chamber, generally placed at a considerable height, and approached by a tall and steep staircase. The finest example of this type of monument is represented by Wat Arun (The Porcelain Temple) on the west bank. Other prangs of importance are the eight placed in front of the Temple Emerald of the



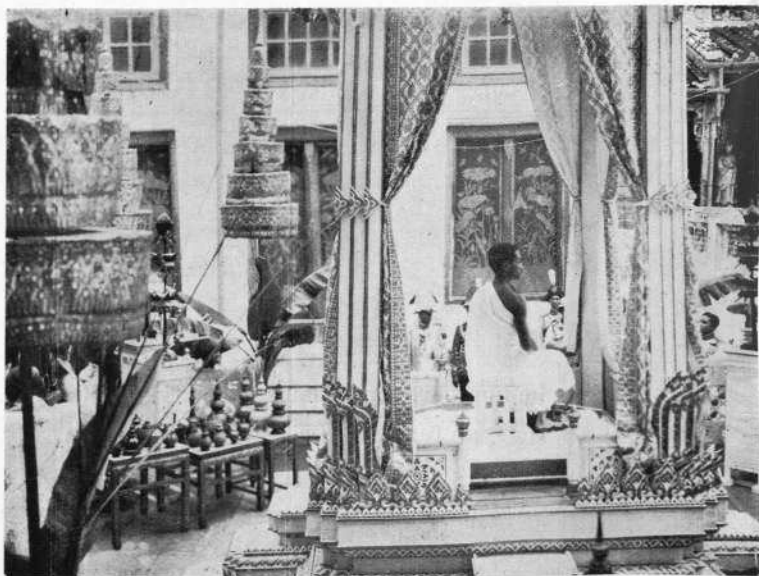
A Prang, Wat Arun.

Buddha as well as the one which crowns the Phra Debbidorn or pantheon in the same temple. Also in Wat Lieb and in Wat Pijaiyat are found fine monuments of this style. The belfries are built in that same style of architecture which is inseparable from that of temple construction, but they seldom attain large or fine proportions; in Bangkok the most remarkable one is the fine pointed belfry standing to the south of the bôt in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. The library buildings called "ho trai" or "Ho Phra Trai-Pidok" — of tripitaka, the sacred law and doctrines of Buddhism — are generally not very conspicuous with the exception of the single fine example to be seen in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha where it stands on the terrace between the golden chedi and the pantheon. All the above-mentioned buildings which go to make up a wat are enclosed in a common brick wall which is called kambaeng keo, i. e., the wall of crystal, pierced by several gates which can generally be closed by tall and heavy red painted doors of teak-wood. In the more modern temples these wooden doors are often replaced by beautiful wrought iron grated gates. The gate buildings may be surmounted by spires in the shape of small stupa or chedi and in some cases, as for instance at Wat Po, the gates are guarded by huge stone figures of Chinese design. The *kuti* or dwellings of the monks, i. e., the cloister, may be within the precincts of the temple itself but in the case of big temples the monks live in special quarters enclosed by walls and separated from the temple proper; such extensive monks quarters are found at Wat Sraket, Wat Sudat, Wat Po, Wat Mahathad, Wat Benjamabopitr, Wat Arun and many other less important monasteries. In most cases the cloisters consist of rows of brick-built, white-washed, one storeyed houses in which the monks must spend the night. The authority over the cloisters, as well as over the temples, is wielded by abbots. The ground occupied by temples in Bangkok covers about one fifth of the area of the city.



The number of religious and national festivals that annually take place in Siam is very great and as the majority of them occur during the dry season — just the time when tourists preferably visit the country — there is good opportunity for witnessing a considerable number of them. Many of these festivals are both picturesque and quaint to western eyes and appeal strongly to the mind of those who love pageantry and vivid colours.

On the 1st of April, being *New Year's Day*, old guns are fired from the palace while monks from several of the most important temples offer up *exorcisms*, a practice which has for its object the chasing away of the evil spirits from the capital. On the following days religious services are held in Wat Phra Keo, the national sanctuary, and His Majesty receives a ceremonial bath. The New Year's ceremonies end with the important state function called Tue Nam, the ceremony of drinking the water of allegiance which takes place on the same day over the whole kingdom, and all civil



His Majesty receives the Ceremonial Bath.

and military officials, from Cabinet Ministers down to the humble village elders, the common soldiers, marines, policemen and gendarmes all renew their oath of allegiance to the sovereign, drinking the consecrated water as token of their loyalty. The 6th of April is celebrated as *Chakri Day* or memorial day of the reigning dynasty. On that day the pantheon is opened for the gaily clad populace who come with flowers, tapers and incense to do honour—as the Romans did to the statues of their emperors—to the statues of the six preceeding kings of the present dynasty.

Shortly after the New Year's festival a *big fair* is held in *Wat Po* for the the benefit and upkeep of this grand temple.

About the middle of April the *Trut Songkran Festival* takes place. Songkran marks the beginning of the New Year in the Chula Sakaraj (Solar) era. (This era commences with A. D. 639 but is now practically out of use in Siam). The feast is no doubt identical with the ancient feast of solstice held since immemorial time by the people of south-eastern Asia. During this feast libations of water are poured to bathe the images of Buddha, the monks, parents and old people. In villages outside Bangkok this rite becomes a friendly combat of water throwing in which the fair sex generally gets the upper hand. While in the capital itself this festival is not much in evidence, it is otherwise in the southern suburb of Paklat where it is held with great enthusiasm by the Mon population living there. Besides the purely religious observances the Mon



The Ploughing Ceremony: Bullocks ready to be harnessed to the gilt wooden plough.

youth of both sexes play different kinds of games, the most popular being the so-called "sabā", a kind of ball-game. The play takes place on an open and smooth piece of ground preferably inside a temple. The young men are ranged on one side, each one being provided with a small ball of stone or ivory. On the opposite side are ranged the pretty Mon girls also with their balls. The point of the game is to hit the ball of the opponent with one's own ball, failing which one is declared a loser and must sing a song for the victorious party! These friendly contests are very amusing to look at besides giving one, at the same time, a good opportunity of seeing the Mon people who represent a very sympathetic and valuable part of the population of Siam. During this time—in the beginning of April—



The Minister of Agriculture deputed by His Majesty to perform the Ploughing Ceremony.



The Ploughing Ceremony.

Brahmins taking part in the Ceremony.

is also observed the rite of "*Ko phra sai*", i.e., building of sand chedi which is done inside the temple enclosures. The meaning of this rite is that for each grain of sand carried to the temple place one of the smaller sins is atoned for—and incidentally the temple ground is provided with a fresh layer of sand. During the month of May the *Rack Nā* or ploughing ceremony takes place; and in addition to the rite in the capital this rite is also performed in several of the more important provincial towns. It is very ancient and was already in existence in Buddha's time two and a half thousand years ago, and is of course of Brahmanical origin. It is always witnessed by H. M. the King and the court who are accommodated in the small picturesque pavilion which is seen standing on a field not far from the Phya Thai Palace. The idea of the



Chulalongkorn Day.

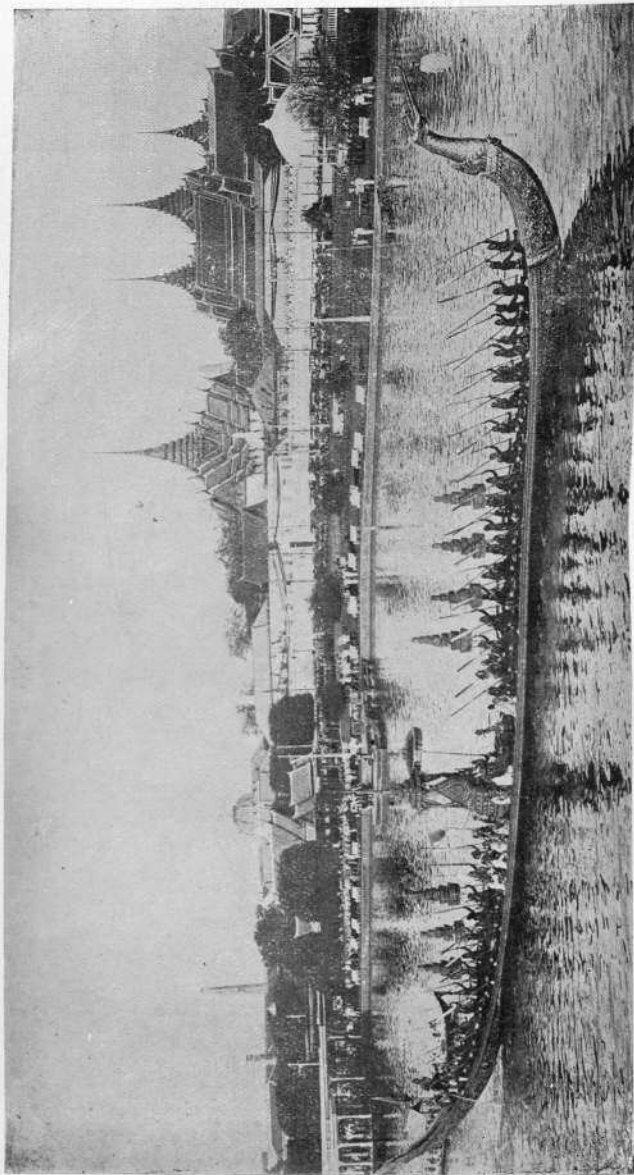
Thousands of people bring floral tributes and incense in token of their reverence and love for the deceased King.

ceremony is to inaugurate the ploughing and planting season and to that end a few furrows are ploughed by a high state official deputed by the King, now generally the Minister of Agriculture. After Brahmanical rites have been performed two gaily decked bullocks are harnessed to a huge gilt wooden plough held by the official in question, who is dressed in ancient court-dress wearing a tall white conical headgear. After the ploughing of a few furrows the bullocks are unharnessed and given different kinds of seeds and grains to eat spread out on the ground in front of them. The assembled people, among whom are always many peasants, eagerly watch the whole performance and the omens which may be drawn therefrom. For instance if the panung, or loin cloth, worn by the deputed official, is drooping very low, then rain will be scarce or even

a drought; on the other hand if it is rather high up then rain will be too plentiful, but if it keeps to the height just below the knee then the omens are for a good year. Of the grain and grasses eaten by the bullocks omens are also taken. Whatever kind is preferred by the oxen, of that there will be scarcity; as for instance if they eat much of the paddy but sparingly of the grass then rice will be scarce and grass abundant in the coming year and so on. Formerly ploughing could not begin before the Raek Nā ceremony had been performed, but this is now a thing of the past. Still a great part of the population attaches much importance to this ceremony. In the month of May is also celebrated the *Wisaka Buja Festival* which commemorates the triple episode of the birth, enlightenment and the



Barges used in the Royal Kathin Procession.



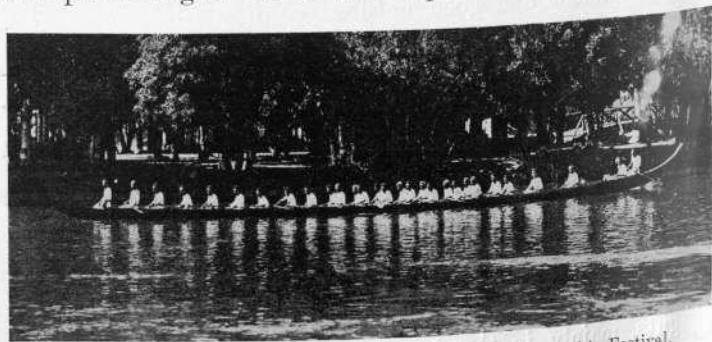
The Royal Kathin.
His Majesty is seated in a golden pavilion placed in a huge gilt and red painted state-barge, the prow of which is carved in the likeness of a dragon.

passing into Nirvāna of Buddha. During the three days that the feast lasts people flock to the temples to listen to the reading of the holy scriptures and by night most of the temples are illuminated with lighted paper lanterns. Pu Khao Thong looks particularly pretty with the string of lighted lanterns encircling its phra chedi.

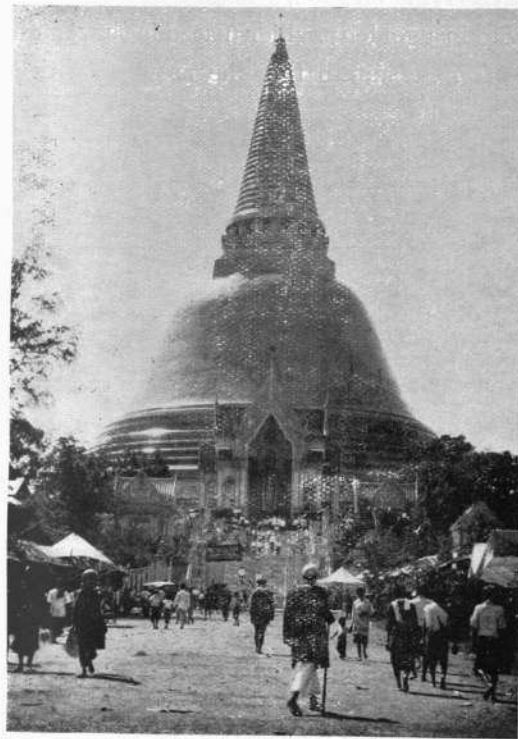
In the month of July begins the *Buddhist Lent* which lasts for three months. During that time the brethren of the yellow robe are not allowed to pass the night outside the cloister to which they belong. The Lent is called Varsa and to enter the Lent is "*Khao Parnsa*". The faithful then visit the temples and cloisters, frequently bringing gifts to the monks. In the middle of October the Lent expires—*Ok Parnsa*—and the festival of "sart" is celebrated. Good friends then present each other with cakes and sweets, but this feast is really a remnant of the ancestor feast held in old India. The "*Ok Parnsa*" is followed by canoe racing on the river and canals where teams of young men and girls compete, with much merriment and good natured chaff.

The 23rd of October is *Chulalongkorn day*, which is kept in remembrance of this beloved monarch. A ceremony is performed at the equestrian statue of this King, which stands on the plaza in front of the Throne Hall, thousands of people bring floral tributes and incense in token of their reverence and love for the deceased sovereign. The end of October is also the time for "*Tot Kathin*," the annual offering of gifts, mainly in the form of new yellow robes, to the

monks, a custom adhered to all over the country. His Majesty the King, himself a pious Buddhist, gives magnificent gifts to a great number of temples, both in the capital and outside, and his people follow the august example. During this time processions of feast-clad people carrying the gifts for the monks may frequently be seen on the way to the different temples. Whether by land or water, but especially by the latter, these processions always present a most gay and vivid spectacle of joy and gaudy colours alike attractive to Siamese and Europeans. Indeed there are not many occasions in which the Siamese delight more than in a real grand "Tot Kathin". On the river may be seen tugs towing whole rows of gaily beflagged boats from which music and joyous laughter are heard over the water. The royal processions, however, are the most interesting and the sight of them should not be missed by tourists who are in the capital at that time. One day His Majesty may be seen proceeding to one of the temples in a state-coach drawn



Long racing canoes of this type are often seen in the Kathin Festival.



Nakon Patom Festival.

by four horses surrounded by his mounted aide-de-camps and equeuries the royal cortege being preceded and followed by detachments of lancers clad in their light blue uniform, wearing plumed helmets and being armed with glittering tufted lances. Then the next day the King may be seen borne in procession seated on a gilt palanquin carried on the shoulders of red-clad porters

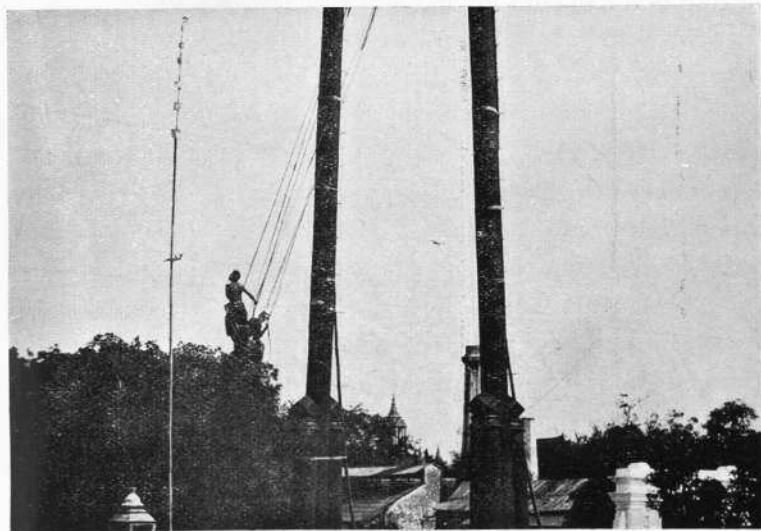
with a page holding the scarlet royal umbrella over His Majesty, while walking on both sides of the palanquin are rows of gentlemen-at-arms carrying their silver spears, besides grand dignitaries of the realm. In front and rear of the royal palanquin, with their bands playing and colours flying, march detachments of the royal bodyguards clad in their scarlet uniforms and wearing white helmets with black plumes. But most picturesque is perhaps the day when the King proceeds

by boat to the monasteries lying on the west-bank of the river. His Majesty is then seated in a golden pavilion placed in the centre of a huge gilt and red painted state-barge, the prow of which is carved in a likeness of a dragon. A hundred red-clad sailors paddle the boat and it is a unique sight to see them lifting their glittering paddles in rhythmical time as they propel the barge over the quiet waters of the Menam. The royal barge is followed by several other crafts of like construction and it is indeed a lovely picture of colour and beauty to see this fleet proceeding along the river—a sight not met with in any other part of the world outside Siam.

Several other feasts take place towards the end of October and during the first days of November. Among these are the annual boat races and the pilgrimage to the idyllic *Phra-chedi Klang Nam*, a temple island lying



The Swing Festival.



The Swing Festival.

Three men swing to and fro until one succeeds in seizing with his mouth a purse of coins.

in the Menam almost opposite the town of Paknam or Samud Prakara, which attracts big crowds of gaily dressed people who come by boat or rail from the capital and the neighbouring land districts. About the same time there is held a big popular fair at *Phu Khao Thong* which lasts for three days and during that time it will be seen that the base of the chedi, crowning the tree-clad brick mountain, is wrapped in a broad piece of red cloth. Thousands of pilgrims then climb the stairs leading up to the chedi to worship the true relics of the Buddha that are enshrined there. At the foot of the mount and in the adjoining streets are hundreds of temporary booths erected where all sorts of toys, sweets and cakes are sold and where shows of different kinds are going on. While this takes place in the capital, there is another three days' fair and

pilgrimage at *Nakon Patom*, a small town lying to the west of Bangkok in the circle of Nakon Jaisri, famous for its gigantic phra chedi, the tallest in Siam. A rite much celebrated in former days but now unfortunately falling in abeyance, is the *Loy Krathong*. This ceremony is probably of Brahmanic origin, the idea being to appease the genii of the waters by offering small floats made of bananas, bamboo or light wood or vessels made of plantain leaves or paper, wherein are placed offerings of food, cakes and sweets, flowers, incense sticks, tapers, dolls and dolls' canoes, etc. These are set adrift on the river while the favour of the water spirits is invoked. In Chiang Mai and along the Mekong river this custom is still very much alive and to see the river on a quiet starlit night decked with hundreds of these small lighted vessels



Seen in the Procession : The Swing Festival.

drifting slowly with the current is a most fairylike spectacle. A little known ceremony taking place also in the month of October is the offering of a sacrificial taper by His Majesty to the Hindu Triad.

One of the year's biggest feasts is, of course, *His Majesty's Birthday* which falls on the 8th November. The ceremonies and state functions occupy five days. There are religious ceremonies, a reception of the diplomatic corps which presents its congratulations, a grand gathering of princes and high officials in the Grand Palace

During this time the whole town is gaily beflagged and the houses decorated, the royal monogram in green



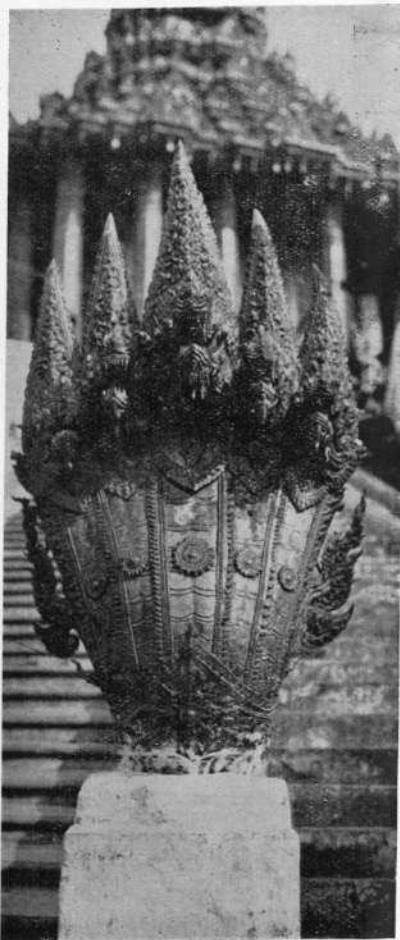
Phra Buddha Bāt, where an impression of Buddha's foot is shown.

and yellow being conspicuous together with the device "Song Phra Charoen"—Long live the King—while at night magnificent illuminations transform the palaces and the whole town into

some fairy place; most picturesque is perhaps the river, where the Siamese men-of-war are illuminated from deck to masthead reflecting their myriads of lights in the dark waters of the river.

The 11th November is a national holiday in memory of the conclusion of the *armistice* that ended the Great War in 1918. Wreaths are then laid at the foot of the small exquisite Memorial situated at the northern extremity of the Royal Plaza in memory of those soldiers who gave their lives to the great cause.

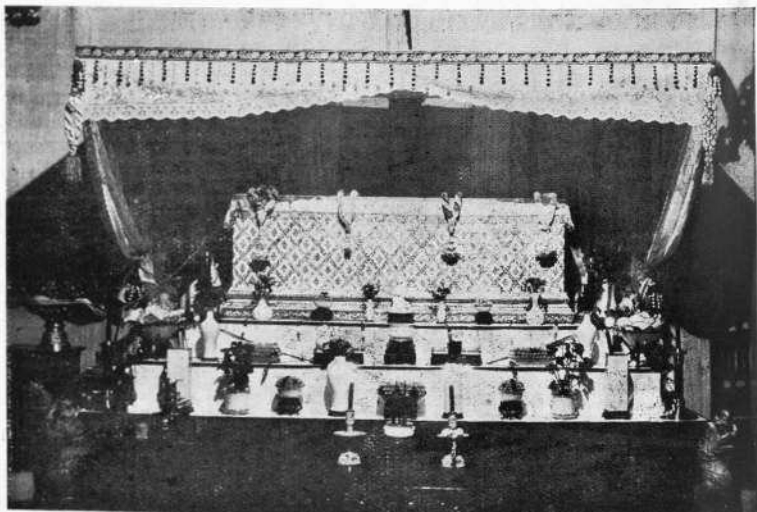
In the month of December or January the Swinging feast, called *Tri Yambhava* or *Loh Ching Cha*, is celebrated. It is apparently a harvest festival and of purely Brahmanic origin and takes place on the square of Sao Ching Cha in front of Wat Sudat in the capital. This feast lasts for two days, though not in succession. A mock king, generally a high official appointed by the King, presides at the ceremony and is borne on a



Phra Buddha Bât.

palanquin, escorted by the court Brahmins, in a great procession to the Square where the actual ceremony is performed. This procession which starts from somewhere near the palace is differently composed each year and in it one may see such anomalies as war elephants with full trappings, motor cars, Siamese warriors in ancient dresses, modern military with their crashing bands and all kinds of strange shows exhibited on the tops of motor lorries. The procession always evokes great interest and attracts thousands of onlookers who throng the streets through which the procession passes. When the procession has arrived at the Swing the Brahmins invoke the Hindu gods and the swinging then starts. In the centre of the square stands a gigantic kind of gallows made of two colossal red painted teak pillars joined together at the top by a carved cross piece from which the swing is hung. Three men standing in the swing now swing to and fro, from east towards west, until one of the men with his mouth succeeds in seizing a purse with money fixed to a bamboo stuck in the ground at a little distance to the west of the swing. During all this time the mock king is supposed to stand on one leg. The swinging being over, the Brahmins sprinkle the crowd with consecrated water out of cow horns, and the picturesque procession returns to its starting point.

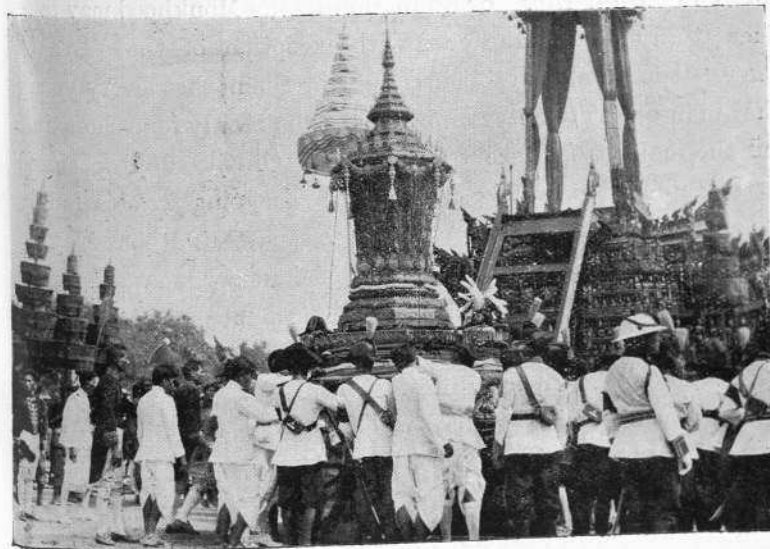
In the month of February occurs the *Chinese New Year* and for three days the evertoiling Chinese ceases work and enjoys life by firing off crackers, eating and visiting friends. In this month also is celebrated the *Magha Buja Festival* or Buddhist All Saints. February too and a part of March is the season for making pilgrimages to the famous shrines at *Phra Buddha Bat*, lying to the North-East of



After death the remain are kept at home for a certain period before the actual Cremation.

Ayudhya, where an impression of the Buddha's foot is shown; at *Phra Chai* near Saraburi, where on a vertical cliff wall is seen the impression of the great Teacher's shadow; at *Phra Taen Sila As*, lying to the west of Utaradit, where a stone, on which the Buddha once sat preaching, is exhibited and finally at *Phra Taen Dong Rang*, to the north of Rajaburi, where according to popular belief the Buddha passed into Nirvana. During the last days of March falls *Trut Thai*, the old Siamese New Year's feast which is celebrated throughout the Menam Valley by the rural population with games and other kinds of amusements, and here end the annual feasts and ceremonies of the Siamese year.

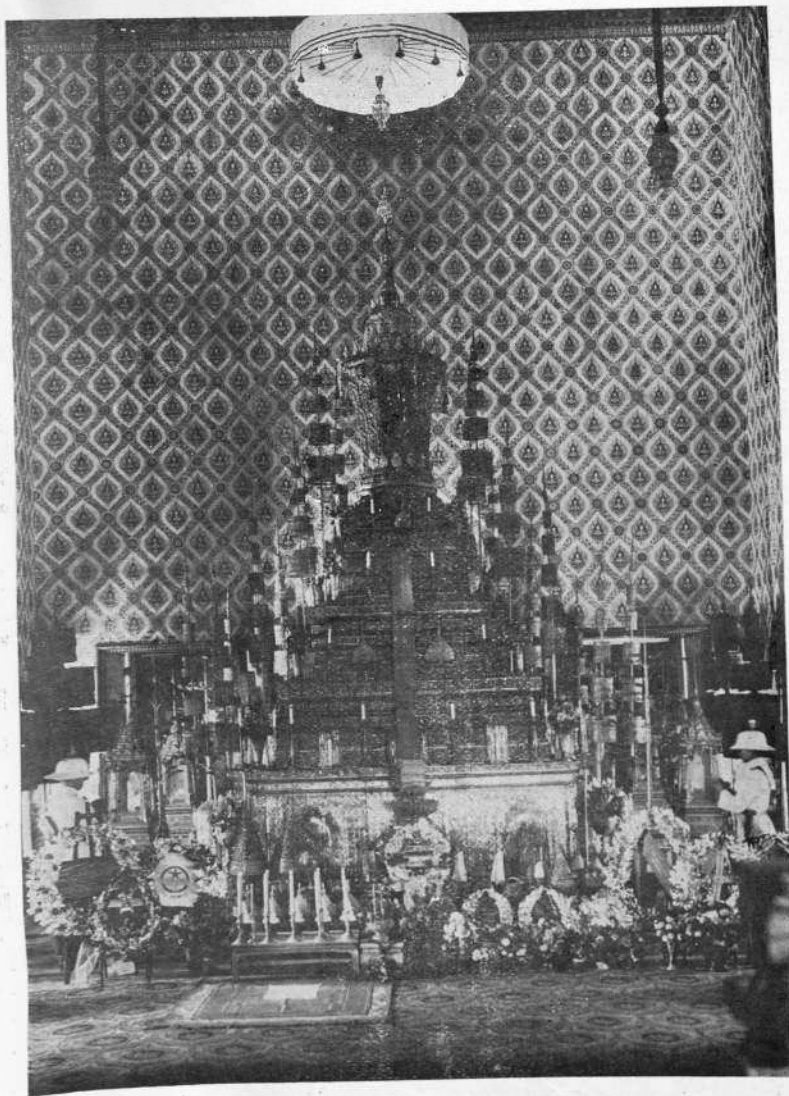
Besides the fixed annual feasts and ceremonies there are, however, many others at which Brahmans or Buddhist monks



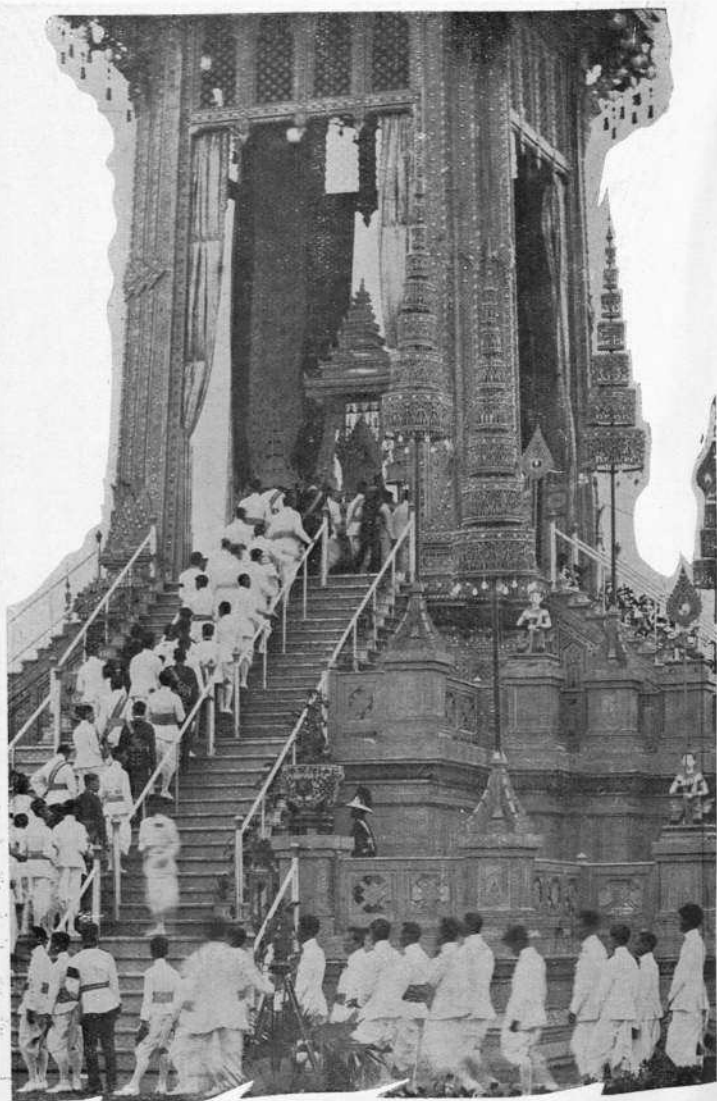
The Royal Cremation of H.M. King Rama VI.
The Golden Urn ready to be placed on the Great Funeral Car.

may officiate, chief among these are the *Tonsure Ceremony*, the *Admission to Monkhood* and the *Cremation of the Dead*. The first ceremony is of purely Brahmanic origin and generally takes place in March-April but is now quickly dying out. In former days the heads of all children were shaved leaving only a small tuft of hair or topknot on the crown. This was kept up to the age of fourteen when the tuft was shorn whereafter the hair was allowed its natural growth. The shaving of the topknot, called "*Garn gon chuk*", is accompanied by Brahmanic rites and feasting—also the invited Buddhist monks are feasted—and the guests all bring gifts to the candidate, who, after a ceremonial bath, is now considered a grown up person.

The "*Buat Nak*" or admission to the Monkhood may take place at any time of the year with exception of the Varsa or Lent. It is an old established rule in Siam that every young Thai man ought to enter Monkhood, even if only for a short time and the majority adhere to this rule. On the day appointed for his admission, a big procession, consisting of his family and friends, is formed. At the head marches a band playing lively marches followed by a group of dancing and grotesquely masked young fellows who represent demons, ogres or wild animals. Next comes the candidate who may be mounted on a pony; he is dressed in white over which he wears a mantle of gauze adorned with gold and silver spangles, his head is crowned with a tall pointed hat and over him is carried an umbrella. After the candidate follow the family and friends all dressed in their best clothes, the female members carrying the yellow robe he is shortly to don, besides gifts and all the other paraphernalia necessary for a monk's modest existence. This procession really symbolises and represents the life of the Buddha, the masked dancers are Mara, the tempter and his host, and the dress worn by the candidate is Prince Siddharta's royal robe. Arrived at the temple the candidate presents himself humbly to the abbot and chapter of monks and after due examination is shaved and clothed in the yellow robe and admitted into the Sangkha or holy brotherhood. There are still other ceremonies such as upon entering a new house, etc., but space forbids their description. Remaining to be mentioned as the last rite of all is the *Cremation*, originally introduced by the Brahmans but now quite saturated with Buddhist ritual and ideas. Cremation is practised



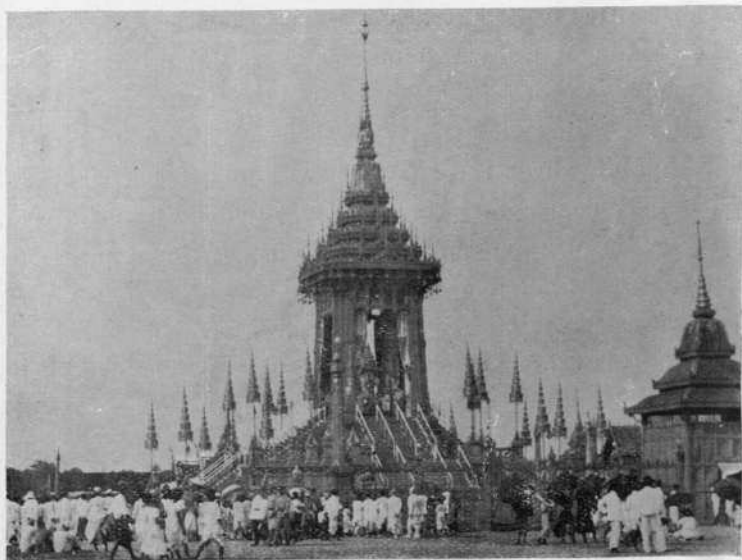
The Lying in State, Dusit Maha Prasad. The Golden Urn contains the Royal Remains of His Majesty King Rama VI.



The Cremation of H. M. King Rama VI.

by the huge majority of the population of Siam in which country this form of disposal of the dead is of immemorial age. When death has taken place the body is seldom cremated at once but may be kept for months in a coffin either at home or in a temple nearby. The actual cremation is preceded by a religious service and after having been carried three times round the pyre the coffin containing the mortal remains is placed upon this, which more than often is itself placed inside a kind of catafalque standing under a tall spired roof. The pyre is then lighted and all present add to the fire by putting scented wood and tapers on it. Cremations are generally commenced towards sunset and the fire is kept burning during the night. The next morning the few scarred bones left together with the ashes are collected and placed in an urn which may be kept at home or deposited in a temple. In the case of the death of the sovereign or princes of high rank the cremation rites become a State function of the highest rank which is performed with much splendour and elaborate ritual. For that purpose a grand and beautiful Phra Meru or Royal catafalque is built on the Royal plaza, the material used being teak wood. In the case of a sovereign there may be as many as five of these fine pavilions constructed in the so-called *prasad* style. The central *prasad* is used for the cremation of the august remains, the others being occupied by monks reading holy scriptures. These pavilions are richly decorated and gilt, with glittering pointed roofs, and present real visions of architectural beauty and elegance. A spacious court with red-painted galleries and salas for the accommodation of the court and the guests surround the Phra Meru. On the

day of cremation the golden bejewelled urn in which the remains of the august dead have been preserved up till then is placed on a tall juggernaut-like state funeral car, the under-body of which is shaped like an ancient vessel with a superstructure recalling that of a prasad. According to Hindu beliefs this car may be preceded by two similar cars. In the foremost sits a prince who strews the ground with roasted rice, an offering to the spirit of the dead; in the second follows a high ecclesiastical person who reads stanzas of the holy scriptures. A broad ribbon of white silken cloth connects this latter car with the funeral car in order to enable the deceased to profit by the prayers offered up by the holy man. Hundreds of red-clad men propel the cars, pulling



The Phra Meru used for the Cremation of the Augu Remains of
H. M. King Rama VI.

them by long stout ropes. Detachments of troops in full dress uniforms, with colours and bands playing a mournful dirge, precede the procession, the funeral car itself being preceded by a band of red-clad musicians beating ancient drums and blowing shrill trumpets. On both sides of the funeral car walk military and civil dignitaries of the realm of the highest rank. Arrived at the Phra Meru, the urn is taken down and borne thrice round the pyre whereafter it is placed on this. His Majesty then ascends the Phra Meru and to the accompaniment of a thundering gun salute, he lights the pyre; princes, princesses and noblemen follow the example and thus ends a ceremony of unsurpassing solemnity and grandeur never to be forgotten by those who have been privileged to witness it even but once.

The next day the bones and ashes are carefully collected and placed in urns and—in the case of a King or Queen—borne in procession to the Grand Palace where they are kept in a special apartment. The ashes, however, are generally deposited in one of the chief temples of Bangkok.



The Ashes are placed in an Urn and borne in procession.

in bronzes, gongs, Siamese porcelain, carved articles may get them either in the curio shops which lie on the corner of Phra Sumern and Dinso Roads near to the Temple of Wat Bovornivesr or in the long narrow bazaar lane running between Rajawongse Road and Chakravat Road.

ROYAL INSTITUTE

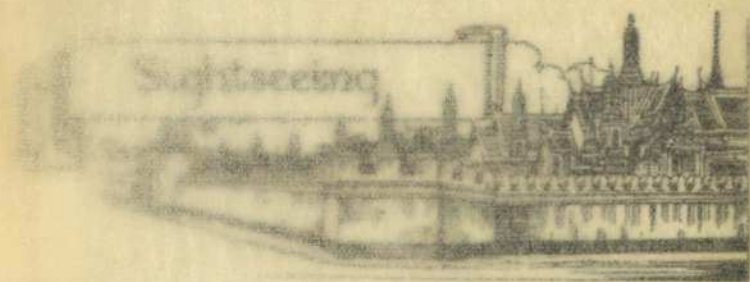
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

Export of Archaeological and Artistic Objects.

In order to guard objects of antiquity to which an historical or national interest attaches, and also objects of rare artistic value, it has been found necessary to take in Siam the same steps as in other countries, and to enact regulations concerning the sending of such objects out of the country.

The Public is informed that the Law on Export of Archaeological and Artistic Objects, B. E. 2469, forbids the sending of objects of the kind referred to without the special authority of the Royal Institute. Permission may be given after due investigation and examination. Customs officers are empowered to search for such objects among the belongings of passengers leaving the country, with authority to seize them when found to be without a permit to export. Offenders may be punished according to the Law.

Any person desirous to take antiques or curios out of Siam has to send a written application to the President of the Royal Institute (Vajiravudh National Library, Na Phra Dhat Road), and to bring the said objects for examination. If one or several of these objects are too heavy to be removed without inconvenience, the President of the Royal Institute may appoint an official to examine them at the residence of the applicant.

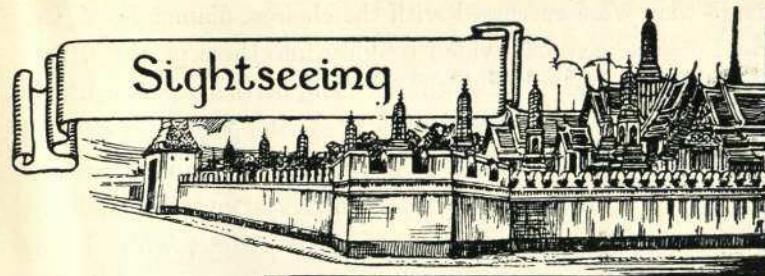


The Grand Palace is in reality a walled town in itself, covering an area of over one square mile. During the period when Bangkok was the capital, i.e. before A. D. 1782, the site of the present palace was occupied by a settlement of Chinese traders, afterwards annexed to the quarter now known as Chinatown, which lies to the south of the palace. Among the earlier palaces which were constructed by King Rama I, only "Dash Maho Prasat" and "Phra Prang Prasat" remain in good condition. The latter is a fine example of the "Wat Phra Kien." With its white-washed, unadorned walls, its tall gable buildings, its cluster of many small golden stupas, its shining spires and golden phra chedi, the Grand Palace always presents a most picturesque and imposing scene, a view seen best either in the early morning or at sunset from the river, for then the rising or sinking rays of the sun illumine the spires of the palaces and temples in a golden glow, while the inland gables flash and

The Temple of the Emerald Buddha.



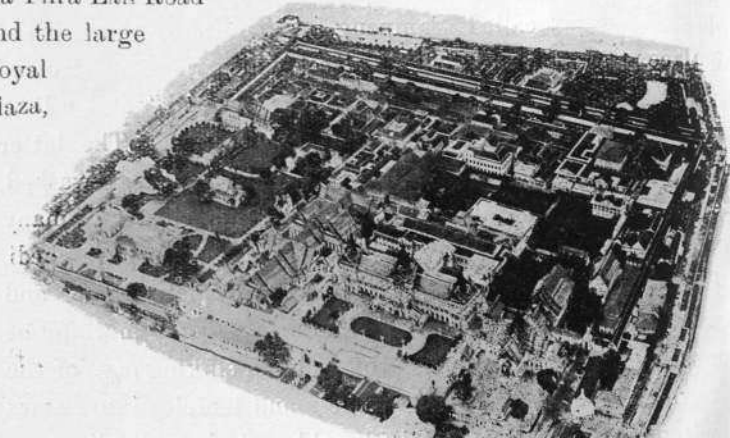
Wat Po.



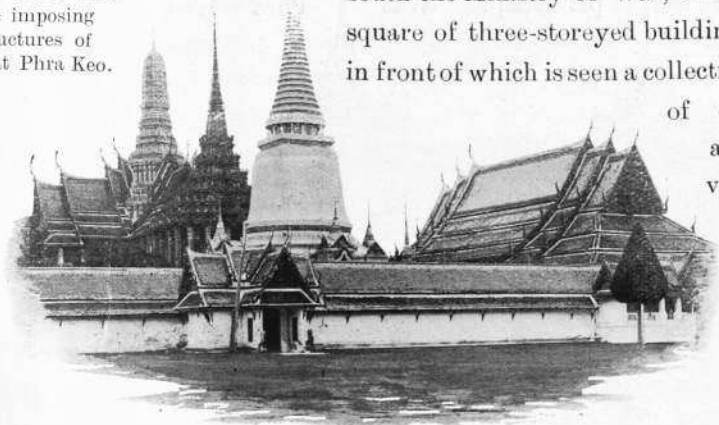
The Grand Palace is in reality a walled town in itself, covering an area of over one square mile. During the period when Dhonburi was the capital, i.e. before A. D. 1782, the site of the present palace was occupied by a settlement of Chinese traders, afterwards removed to the quarter now called Sampeng, which lies to the south of the palace. Among the earlier palaces which were constructed by King Rama I., only "Dusit Maha Prasad" and "Phra Tinang Amarindr" remain in good condition. The latter stands quite close to Wat Phra Keo.* With its white-washed, castellated walls, its tall gate buildings, its cluster of many tiered coloured roofs, its flashing spires and golden phra chedi, the Grand Palace always presents a most picturesque and charming view, a view seen best either in the early morning or at sunset from the river, for then the rising or sinking rays of the sun transform the spires of the palaces and temples into flames of molten gold, while the inlaid gables flash and glitter as

*The Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

though they were encrusted with the choicest diamonds. The Grand Palace may be divided roughly into three portions, viz: a northern, central and southern. The northern part contains in its eastern half the Wat Phra Keo, the golden chedi and adjacent buildings surrounded by galleries, while in its western half lies a group of Ministerial and Departmental buildings. The central portion contains a row of palaces, while in the southern part are a number of buildings mostly occupied by the household of the late King Chulalongkorn. To the west, the Grand Palace faces the river and here there is a fine esplanade with green lawns and shady trees. Close to the river stands a beautiful sala or reception room, a small carved and gilt palace in itself, which is used for purpose of audience when His Majesty the King departs or arrives by water; the handsome three-masted Royal Yacht "Maha Chakri" may often be seen moored in front of this pavilion. To the north, the palace faces the Na Phra Lan Road and the large Royal Plaza,



On entering the Grand Palace, one sees on the left hand side, the imposing structures of Wat Phra Keo.



called the Sanam Phra Meru. To the east it faces from north to south the Ministry of War, a huge square of three-storeyed buildings in front of which is seen a collection of old and very

interesting guns; next comes the Saranrom Palace, now occupied by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and its beautiful park; finally, to the south, the palace faces the extensive group of temples called Wat Phra Jétubon or Wat Po. Tourists having obtained the necessary permission to visit the Grand Palace and Wat Phra Keo, are always admitted by the gate called Pratu Visés Jaisri (the Gate of Supreme Victory). Having entered this gate one follows a broad stone paved road leading to the inner palace gate; on the right-hand are the Ministries of Finance and of Privy Seal. On the left lie the barracks of the Palace Guards, then one



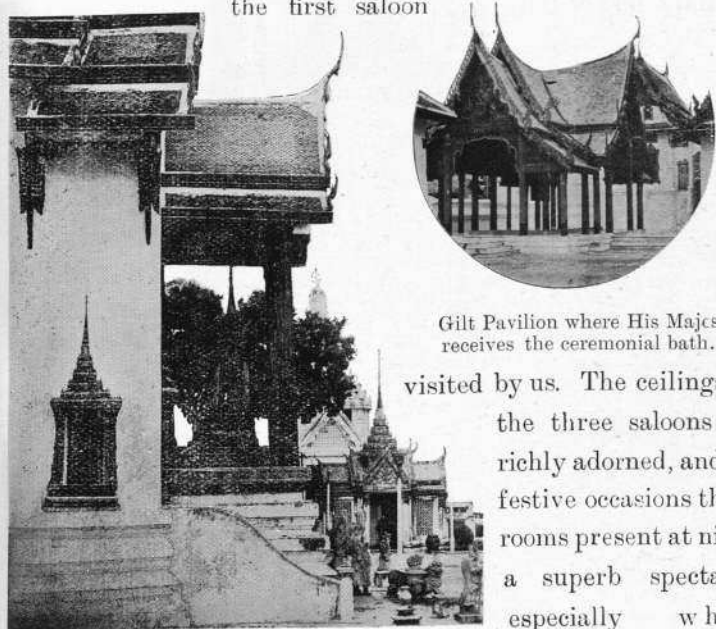
reception of King Phra Narai's Ambassador by King Louis XIV in Versailles, Queen Victoria receiving the Siamese Embassy sent by King Mongkut, and European Ambassadors being received by the late King Chulalongkorn. Next we visit the saloons lying to the left of the ante-chamber. The first saloon is partitioned into two parts by a row of fine marble columns, the walls being covered with big paintings of the Royal Family. Below these pictures is placed a row of busts of the European Monarchs and Chiefs of State who reigned during the seventies of the last century. A silver equestrian Statue of the late King and a beautiful model of the Albert Memorial, also of silver, are placed on the floor, while between



Interior, Chakri Palace

the windows facing the courtyard a row of bronze statues clad in the armour and uniforms of the 17th Century act as torch-bearers. Beyond this saloon lies the so-called green saloon, the southern wall of which is entirely covered by a huge painting of King Chulalongkorn and Queen Saovabha Bhongsri surrounded by their children. The other walls are covered with paintings of other members of the Royal Family or deceased statesmen of note. Among the latter one notices the characteristic features of Somdech Chao Phraya Suriwongse, who was the Regent during the minority of King Chulalongkorn. We finally visit the saloon lying to the right of the entrance hall. This last saloon with its marble colonnade and portraits of members of the Royal Family resembles

the first saloon

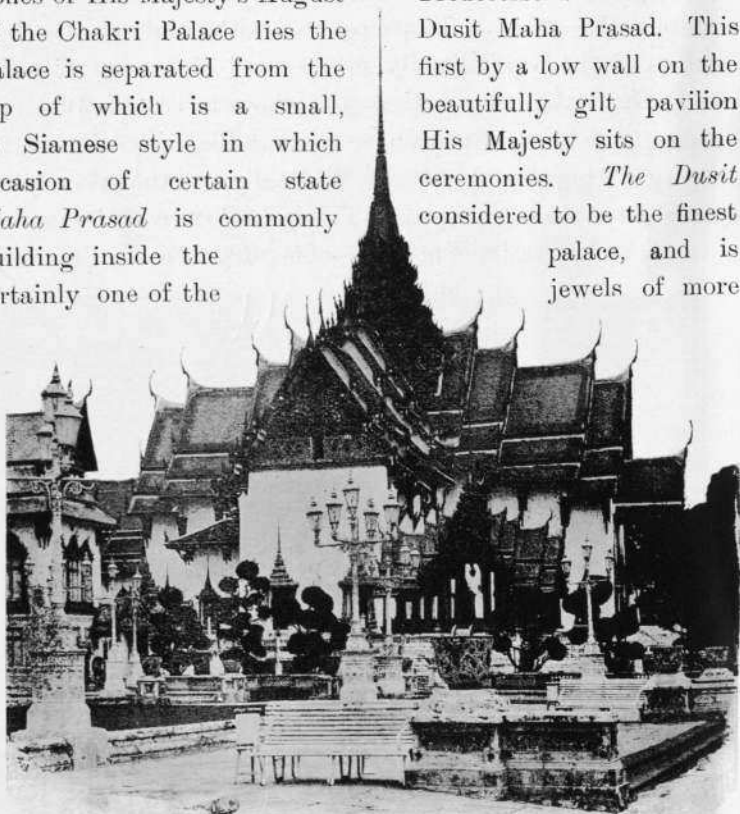


Gilt Pavilion where His Majesty receives the ceremonial bath.

visited by us. The ceilings in the three saloons are richly adorned, and on festive occasions these rooms present at night a superb spectacle, especially when thronged with the

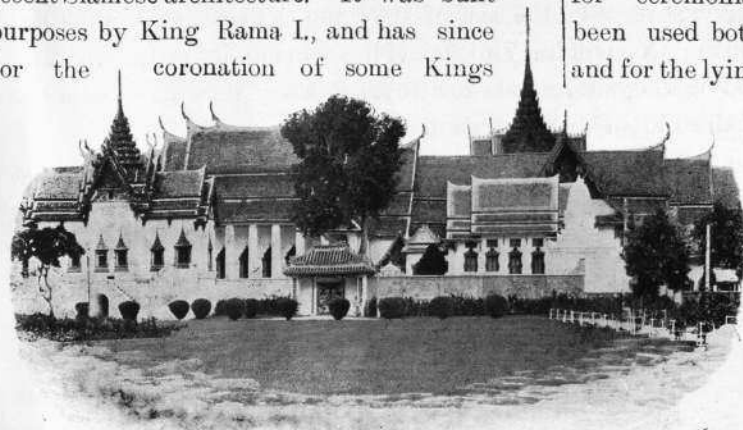
Dusit Maha Prasad (front portion.)

grand dignitaries of the Kingdom arrayed in their sumptuous uniforms. The third storey, to which visitors are not generally admitted, contains among other rooms, a kind of Royal mausoleum wherein are placed the Golden Urns, in which are deposited the bones of His Majesty's August Predecessors. To the west of the Chakri Palace lies the palace is separated from the top of which is a small, in Siamese style in which His Majesty sits on the occasion of certain state ceremonies. *The Dusit Maha Prasad* is commonly considered to be the finest building inside the palace, and is certainly one of the jewels of more



Dusit Maha Prasad

recent Siamese architecture. It was built for ceremonial purposes by King Rama I., and has since been used both for the coronation of some Kings and for the lying



Interior of the Grand Palace
with the spire of Dusit Maha Prasad in the background.

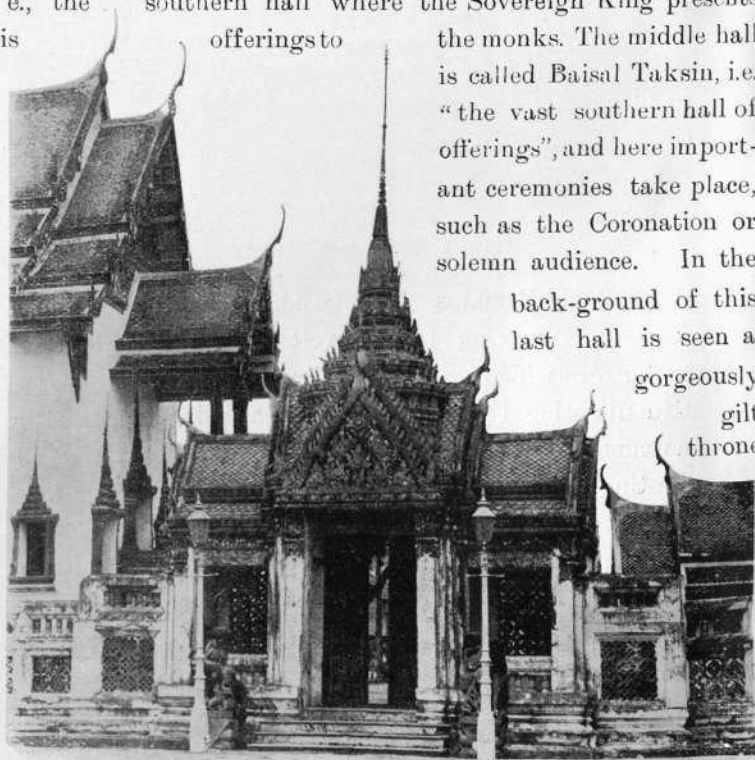
in state of Royal Remains. The building has the form of a blunt cross, the four wings being covered with five tiered roofs, from the centre of which (where the ridges of the roofs meet) rises a beautiful nine-tiered prasad spire, its base being supported by four enormous Garudas. In the middle of its only chamber is an interesting relic from the early history of Siam, a big stone slab with carved edges now used as the seat of a throne. This stone was hewn in A. D. 1292 by King Rama Kamhaeng, of Sukhōdai, son of that Phra Sri Indratitya who liberated the Thai from the yoke of the Cambodians. The stone was, in the days when Sukhōdai was a capital, used by the King who sat on it when he gave audience or instructed his people and at other times by Buddhist priests. His Majesty's Grandfather, the learned King Mongkut, when a monk himself, discovered this stone among the ruins of the old capital and had it brought down to Bangkok. To the north of the Dusit Maha Prasad lies a building which formerly housed the Ministry of the

Privy Seal. To the east of the Chakri Palace stands the Phra Tinang Amarindra Vinichai (Phra Tinang, literally, where the god or king sits, stands for Royal Palace; Amarindra being one of the Indian God Indra's many names, Amarindra Vinichai is the audience hall of Indra). This palace is the anterior part of a system of halls of which the last is called Chakra Bati Taksin i. e., the southern hall where the Sovereign King presents his offerings to

the monks. The middle hall is called Baisai Taksin, i. e. "the vast southern hall of offerings", and here important ceremonies take place, such as the Coronation or solemn audience. In the

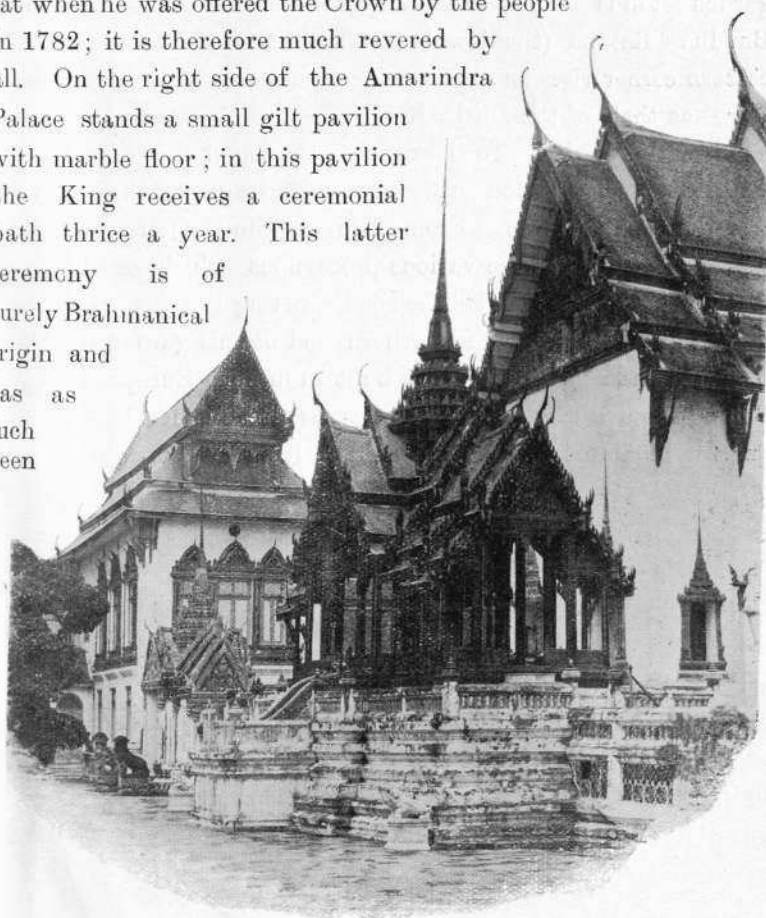
back-ground of this last hall is seen a gorgeously

gilt
throne



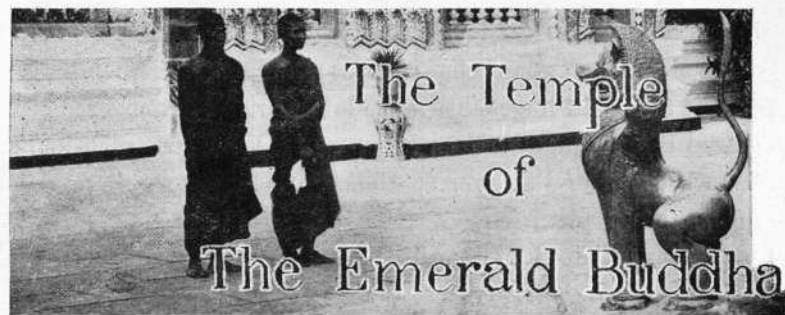
Entrance leading to Dusit Maha Prasad.

on which the King appears on such occasions. To the west of the Amarindra Palace is a small sala closely curtained. This seemingly unimportant looking structure is, however, of great historical interest because it was in this sala that King Rama I. sat when he was offered the Crown by the people in 1782; it is therefore much revered by all. On the right side of the Amarindra Palace stands a small gilt pavilion with marble floor; in this pavilion the King receives a ceremonial bath thrice a year. This latter ceremony is of purely Brahmanical origin and has as such been



Gilt Pavilion near Dusit Maha Prasad.

handed down from the time when the Cambodians still were the masters of Siam. On the east side of the Amarindra Palace, between this and the palace wall, is a garden called Shivalai, i.e. Shiva's abode. In the middle of this garden stands a bôt built of grey marble and called Phra Buddha Ratana (the jewel of Buddha), while in the south-eastern corner rises an old palace crowned by the same kind of spire as that of the Dusit Maha Prasad and bearing the same name as the garden. To the east, on the top of the palace wall, there is a construction called Phra Tinang Suddhaisvariya, a small palace in itself. From this building their Majesties and the court watch the various processions, which come along the Sanam Chai Road, (i.e. the road skirting the eastern palace enceinte). Finally at the northern end of this garden lies the Borom Piman Palace, which is built in modern European style. Behind these palaces just visited lies, as already mentioned, the quarter inhabited by the household of King Chulalongkorn.



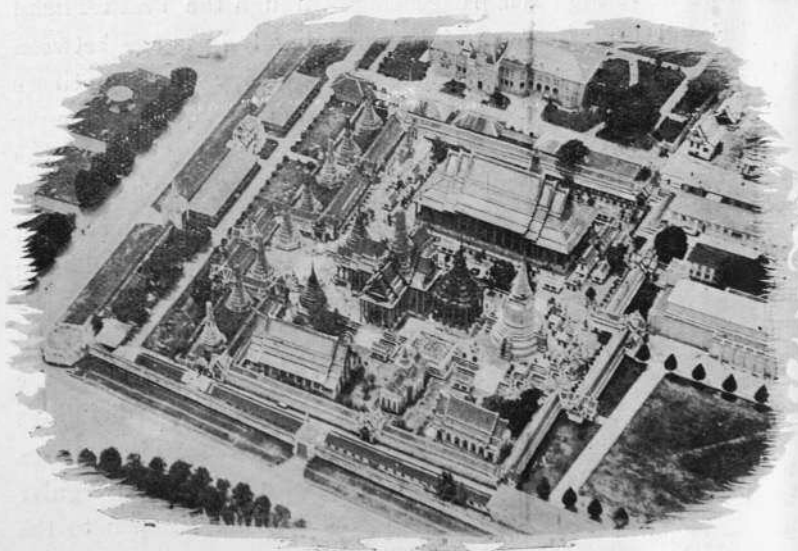
To visit the Temple of the Emerald Buddha or *Wat Phra Keo* we leave the inner palace court through the Pratu Piman Jaisri and thereafter turn right, following the passage between the Sala Sahadai and the offices of the Privy Purse until we arrive at a door in the galleries which enclose the temple and adjacent buildings. The buildings lying inside the

gallery may be divided into four groups, i.e. the bôt containing the famous and sacred image of the so-called Emerald Buddha; the terrace on which stand the pantheon, the Maha Mandapa (pronounced Mondhop) and the Golden Phra Chedi; the eight phra prangs and the group of buildings lying to the north of the terrace. The galleries are built in the form of an irregular square closed to the exterior but open to the courtyard. They are constructed of white-washed bricks and roofed with red tiles. On the inner sides of these walls are painted scenes from Ramayana, part of these paintings



The Kinara.

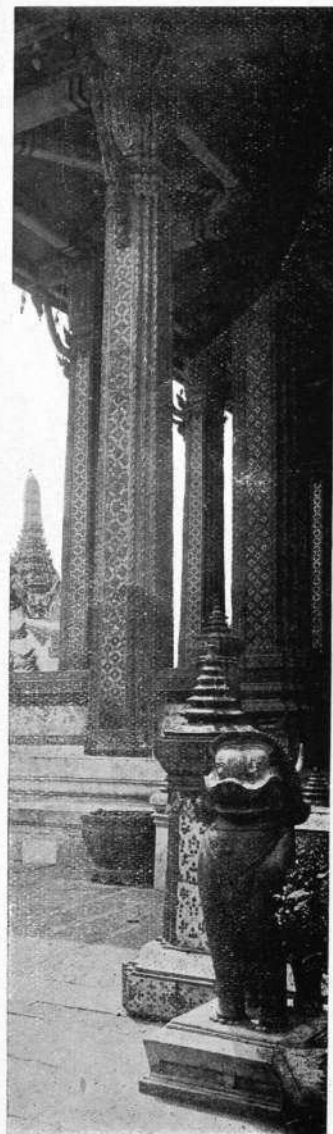
being under restoration. A number of heavy wooden doors pierce the faces of the galleries; at three of these entrances are seen pairs of huge statues made of brickwork covered with glazed tiles. These figures represent demons, so well-known from the epic of Ramayana; the statues are very impressive, quaint and picturesque. The bôt, usually called Wat Phra Keo,* occupies the southern part of the space enclosed by the galleries, its axis lying east and west. A low wall pierced by four entrances which are guarded by pairs of bronze lions surrounds this building. The eight bai sema are placed outside this wall. The exterior walls of the bôt are covered with a layer



The Temple of the Emerald Buddha
(Taken by the Royal Aeronautical Service).

* Its official name is Wat Phra Sri Ratana Sassadaram, i.e., the Temple containing the Beautiful Jewel of the Image of the Divine Teacher.

of plaster inlaid with flowers and patterns of gold and blue, their faces being broken by rows of windows, while at the base of the walls runs a frieze of small Garudas grasping serpents in their hands. Both on the eastern and western gables are some carved figures of the god Vishnu mounted on the Garuda. The roof is covered with dark blue glittering tiles, its projecting eaves being supported by rows of columns which run on both of the long sides of the building; at the end of the bôt the projecting roofs are supported by rows of big columns forming roomy porticos. Round the eaves of the roof are hung many small, sweet-toned bells, consisting of gilt pieces of metal shaped like Bhodi leaves, whose silvery tones may be heard to the farthest corners of the enclosure as they swing to and fro with every gentle breeze. Each end of the bôt is pierced by three tall doors encased by pilasters and surmounted with Prasâd spires; the doorways are very deep and



Entrance to the Bôt
Wat Phra Keo.

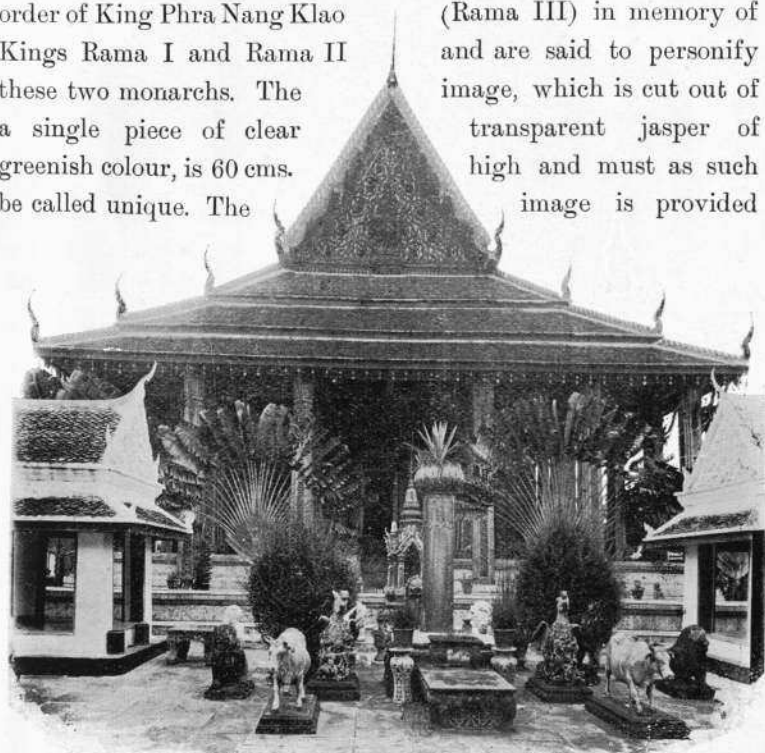
decorated with big heavily gilt plaster reliefs representing ogres and demons; the door sills are covered with brass. The panels of these doors are inlaid with mother of pearl patterns of excellent craftsmanship, the panels of the central rows of circles animal, while are made up of as "lai kranok"



The Mondhop used as a Library.

designs being of a rare beauty. On the door are designs consisting of vertical each circle containing a mythological the panels of the two side doors intricate patterns known in Siamese a kind of stylised flower patterns, said to have been evolved from the rice flower. The inlaid doors of this temple together with those of the bôt in Wat Po are without comparison, the finest examples to be found in this branch of art in Siam. We now enter the holy of holies of the kingdom, and come into the presence of the venerated jasper image of Buddha, known as the Phra Keo Morakot. There in the background in the mysterious half-light it sits enthroned under a golden canopy, high up

on the top of a most gorgeously decorated and gilt altar which rises tier upon tier. At the base of this altar are arrayed the gold and silver trees which were formerly sent in token of tribute by the Lao vassal princes and from the Malay Rajahs to their overlord in Bangkok. At the two foremost corners of the altar stand life-sized golden statues holding nine-tiered gilt umbrellas in their clasped hands. These figures represent Gautama in his princely dress, they were made in 1842 by order of King Phra Nang Klao (Rama III) in memory of Kings Rama I and Rama II and are said to personify these two monarchs. The image, which is cut out of a single piece of clear transparent jasper of greenish colour, is 60 cms. high and must as such be called unique. The image is provided



The Bôt Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

with three changes of dresses and clothes these vestments are worn respectively during the rainy, the cold and the hot seasons. According to tradition this

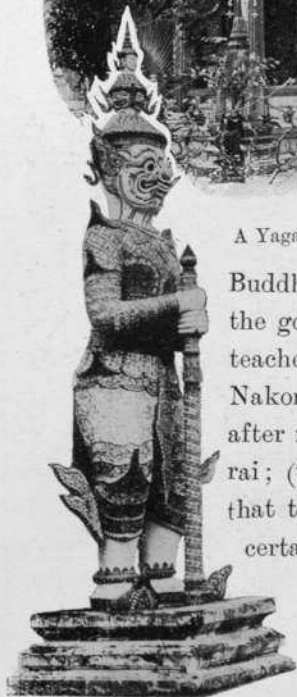
of vestments consisting of head of pure gold studded with jewels; are worn respectively the cold and the hot ing to image of



A Yaga.

The Bôt (side view.)

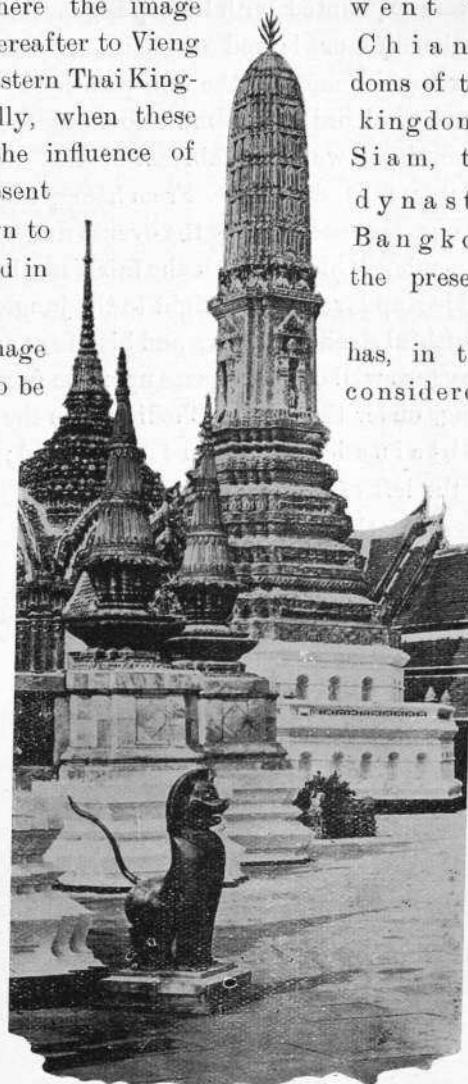
Buddha was made by the king of the gods for Nagasena, a famous religious teacher in India; from Ceylon it came to Nakon Sridharmaraj, from which place, after many wanderings, it came to Chiengrai; (that the present image really was in that town in the year A. D. 1436 is at least certain). From Chiengrai it next went to Nakon Lampang where it was kept for some years in the Wat Phra Keo and in 1468 it was placed in the big temple of the Chedi Luang in



Chiengmai. From there the image Luang Prabang and thereafter to Vieng (capitals of the north-eastern Thai Kingdoms of the same names) and finally, when these were brought under the influence of the first king of the present brought the image down to where he had it placed in Wat Phra Keo.

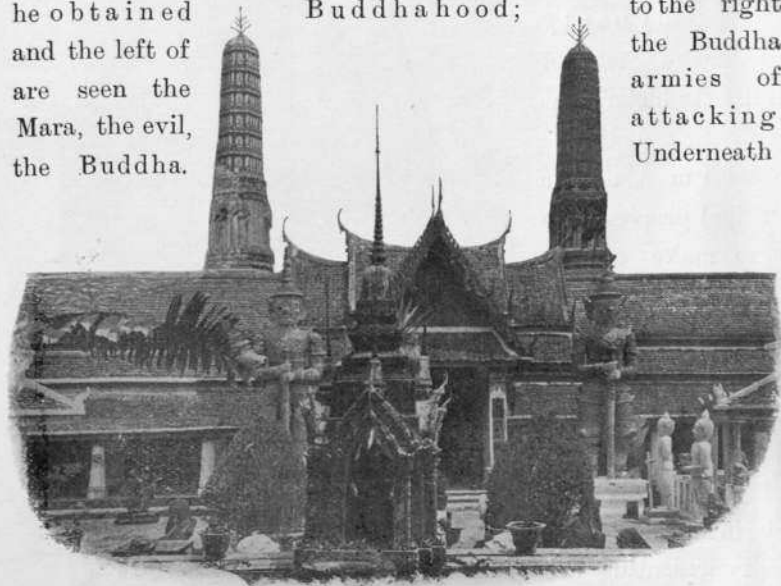
This sacred image process of time, come to be as the palladium of the dynasty and of the State of Siam. Its history has been intimately linked up with most of the principal peoples who go to make up the widespread Thai Race. The ceiling of the bôt with its solid cross-beams is decorated in red and gold, and the walls are decked with very interesting frescoes representing the most important events of the life of Buddha.

went to Chiangdoms of the kingdoms Siam, the dynasty Bangkok the present has, in the considered



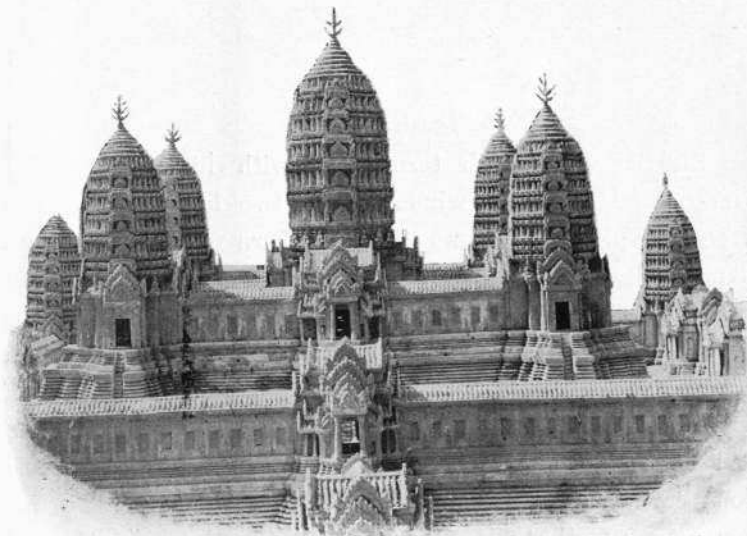
One of the eight prangs representing the eight planets.

Visitors acquainted with Bishop Bigandet's excellent translation of "the life or legend of Gautama" will easily understand and recognize most of the wall paintings. To follow these in chronological order one must commence with the pictures on the southern wall just abreast of the altar, where the birth of Gautama is depicted. From here going towards the eastern wall one sees successively the events during Buddha's childhood and manhood, his life with the fair Yasodhara in the fairy palace outside Kapilavastu, his flight to the jungle during the night on his faithful steed Kandhaka and his life as an ascetic. Arriving at the eastern wall one next gazes upon the famous scene, the Buddha sitting under the sacred Bhodi tree in the grove of Gaya, where he obtained Buddha hood; to the right and the left of the Buddha are seen the Mara, the evil, the Buddha.

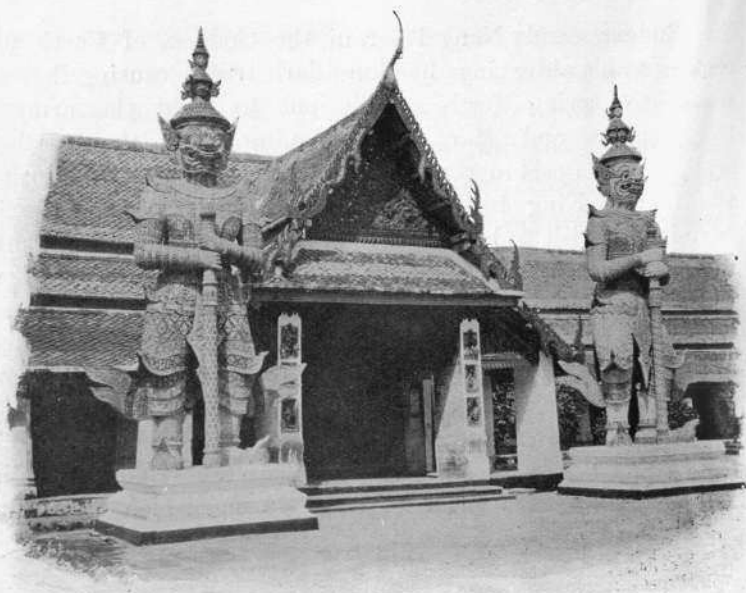


Looking out from the Bôt.

the Buddha stands Nang Dhorani, the Goddess of Earth, who coming to his aid wrings her long dark tresses causing floods of water to spring forth which put to flight the army of the demons and Mara. Continuing along the northern wall, i. e. from east to west, one thereafter sees Buddha's visit to the famous King Bimbisara, his first conversion of the five hermits, his visit to heaven where he preached the law to his mother Queen Maya, and so on, event following event, until we reach the western wall, i. e. the one behind the altar, where a huge fresco gives a representation of the Buddhistic cosmology. All these pictures are painted on the portion of the walls above the windows and the doors, the space between the latter being covered with pictures representing scenes from the Jatakas, i. e. the lives of the former Buddha or Bodhisat (Buddha having had 550 existences prior to that during which he became



Model of Angkor Wat.



Demons guarding an entrance.

the Buddha and which terminated with his entrance into Nirvâna). Under the windows are two long rows of very interesting pictures, the one on the southern wall representing a Siamese fleet of gorgeously painted and manned war canoes, while the other on the northern wall depicts a Siamese army on the march with caparisoned and harnessed war elephants. Grouped on both sides of and behind the altar are a number of Royal Insignia, such as many-tiered parasols besides various gold embroidered talapats or fans, Royal gifts to learned and pious ecclesiastics of high rank. In some glass montres are seen, amongst other gifts to the sacred image, the costly gold vestments worn during the different seasons as already mentioned above.

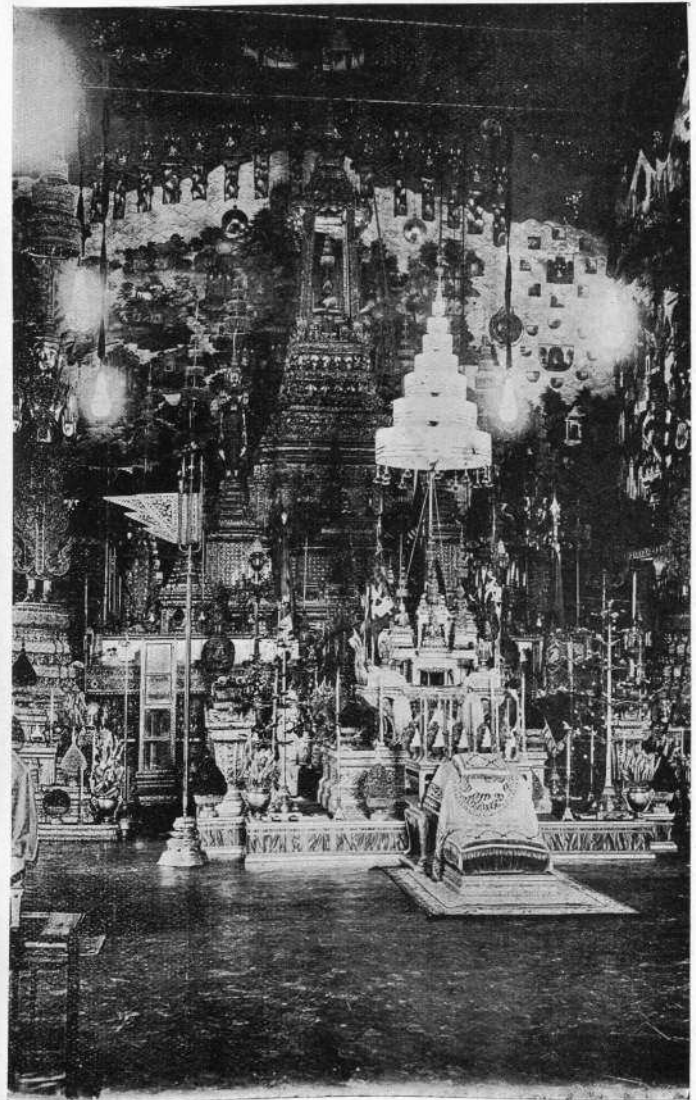
In the bôt of the Emerald Buddha many important State ceremonies take place annually, such as the great State ceremony called "Thue Nam" or the Drinking of the Water of Allegiance by the chief civil and military officials in the presence of His Majesty; at such times the bôt presents a wonderful and splendid picture, so resplendent with pomp and colour that a painter's brush can hardly do it justice. The bôt which was built by King Rama I. in 1785 still remains in almost exactly the same condition as it was then, due largely to the



The terrace showing three of the eight prangs representing planets.

have power to cure diseases. At the foot of its pedestal lies the stone slab and the roller commonly used for grinding Siamese medicaments. The second important group of buildings includes the pantheon, the Mahā Mandapa and the Golden Phra Chedi. These buildings all lie on a marble paved terrace situated to the north of the bôt. The Prasad Phra Debbidorn or pantheon is the easternmost of these three buildings and is constructed in the form of a blunt cross with four frontons and covered with quadruple tiered roofs, the eaves of which are supported by a colonnade surrounding the building; from the centre, where the ridges of the roofs meet, rises a tall yellow phra prang which terminates in the trichula of Shiva.* Originally this building was destined to shelter the image of the Emerald Buddha, but owing to the lack of space in the interior chamber for big state ceremonies, it was altered for its present use. Here the statues of His Majesty's ancestors are kept. The pantheon is opened to the public only once a year when the populace of all classes attired in their best holiday dresses throng in front of the broad staircase with tapers and incense, ready to worship. This event forms a picture full of vivid colour which can hardly be surpassed anywhere else in the world. The central building, the Mahā Mandapa or Mondhop is a tall square formed building, covered with a prasād shaped roof, terminating in a tall slender spire. The eaves of the roof are supported, as are those of the pantheon, by colonnades running round the building. Four small staircases lead up to the narrow terrace on which the building rests, the railings of these

* The ensemble of this peculiar and picturesque monument makes a most striking impression and stands out among the many beautiful temples of the Capital.



Interior of the Bôt.

With the high altar of the Emerald Buddha in the background,

staircases being shaped like golden many-headed nagas; while on the four corners of its base are placed fine stone images of the Buddha from Borobudur.

In the Mahā Mandapa is kept the Siamese pali version of the Tripitika which was completed during a famous religious council held in Bangkok in the year B. E. 2331 (A. D. 1788). The tall stupa or phra chedi is called Phra Sri Ratana Chetiya and was erected as recently as 1885, it is wholly covered with minute



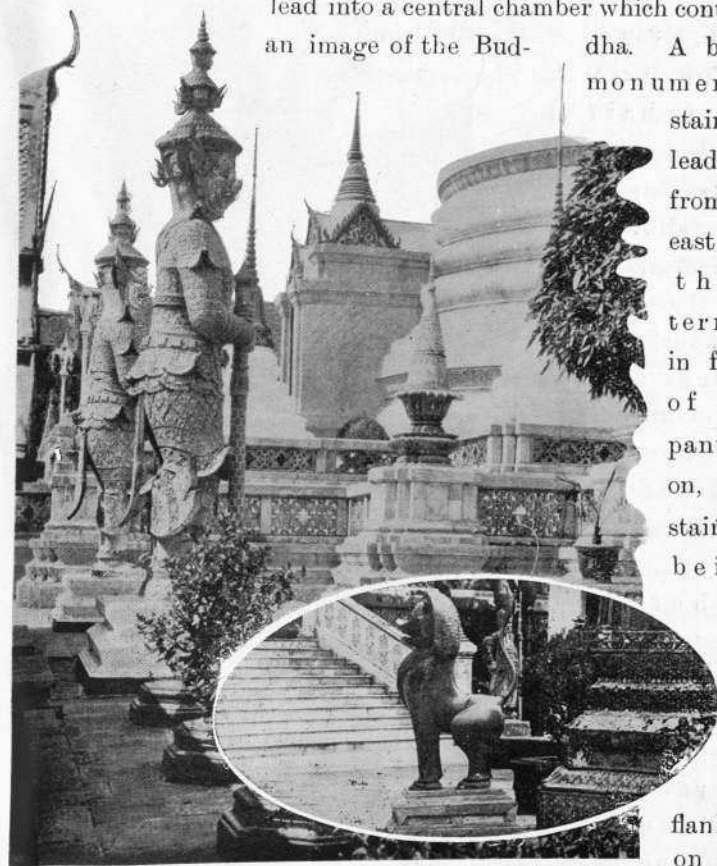
The Central Door of the Bōt.

gold coloured tiles and when seen from a distance looks like a

solid mass of gold. At sunrise and at sunset when the chedi catches the rose edged hues of the rising or setting sun it glitters and glows over the coloured roofs of the temples and the white of the many tiered spires of the adjacent prangs and chedi. Four doors, their porches surmounted by small chedi

lead into a central chamber which contains an image of the Bud-

dha. A broad monumental staircase leads up from the east to the terrace in front of the pantheon, this staircase being

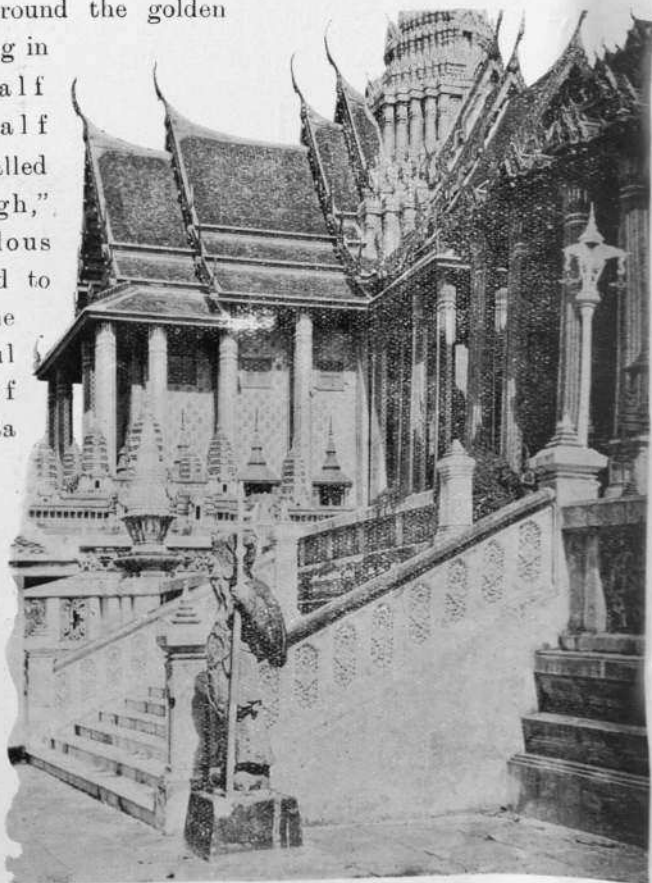


flanked on its

Around the Library and the Maha Mandapa.

top by two golden chedi, the bases of which are supported by a row of 18 demon kings acting as atlantes. On the terrace in front of and on both sides of the pantheon are a number of quaint mythological figures, half men half birds, male and female, called "kinaras." These, as well as the figures which partly surround the golden

chedi, being in shape half demon, half lion and called "norasingh," are fabulous beings said to live in the wonderful forest of Himavanta at the foot of the Himalayas. Other objects of interest to be seen on the terrace are the concrete



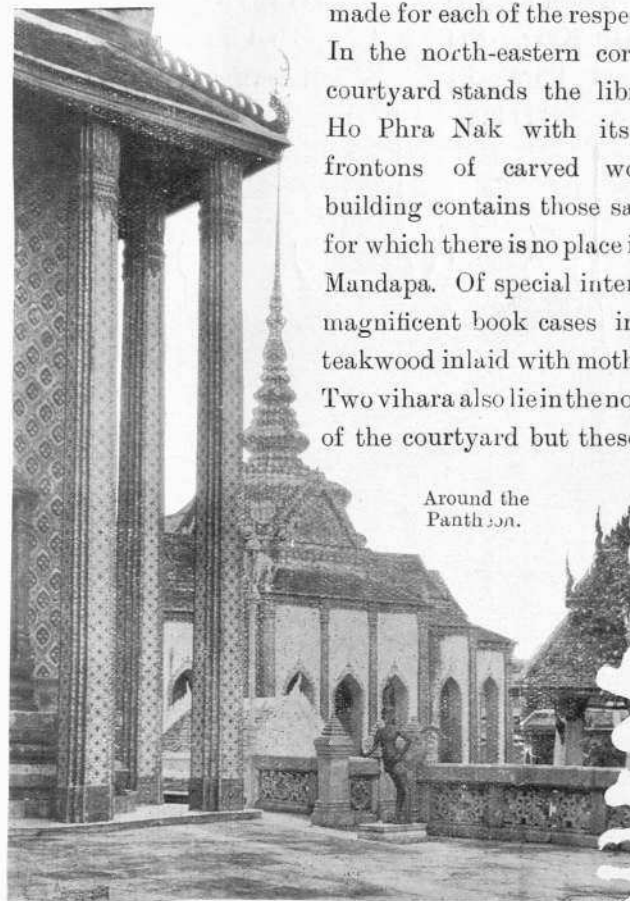
Steps leading up to the Pantheon.

model of the famous Angkor temple and the groups of bronze statues, representing the white elephants that were captured during the reigns of Rama II, the IVth and the Vth. These elephants are placed around small marble structures surmounted by golden prasads wherein are placed models of the Royal Crown

made for each of the respective kings.

In the north-eastern corner of the courtyard stands the library called Ho Phra Nak with its beautiful frontons of carved wood. This building contains those sacred books for which there is no place in the Mahā Mandapa. Of special interest are the magnificent book cases in lacquered teakwood inlaid with mother of pearl. Two vihara also lie in the northern part of the courtyard but these are of no

Around the Pantheon.



special interest. Before leaving this national sanctuary let us cast a glance on the eight towers or phra

prangs which are arrayed in a row from north to south in front of Wat Phra Keo and which were erected by King Rama I.; the colour of each prang is different from the others for each of them corresponds with the colour of one of the eight planets. These eight planets represent the Buddha, Law, the Assembly, the Monks, the King, the Buddha) and Phra Sri future Buddha.

Disciples,
Bodhisat
Ariya Mettraya,

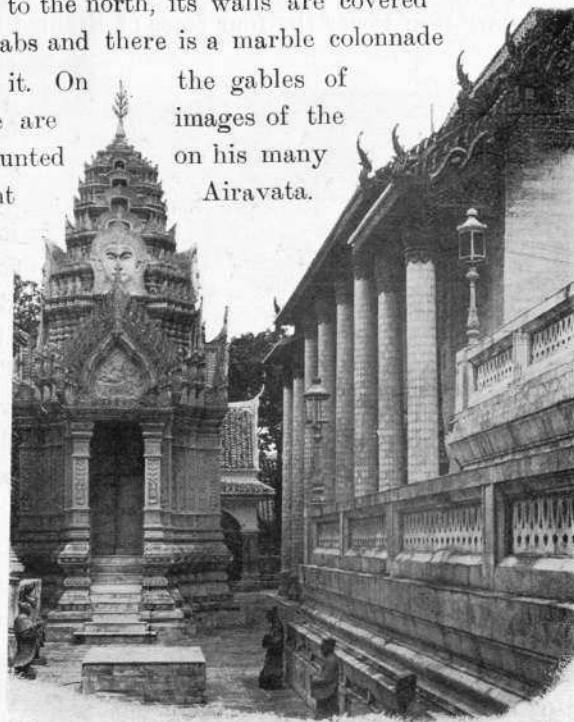


The Pantheon.



As previously mentioned in this chapter the Grand Palace is bordered on the east by the Saranrom Garden. On the northern side of this garden lies a small but exquisite temple by the name of *Wat Rajapradisth*, the temple of Royal Creation. This temple consists of a Bôt and a chedi built upon a terrace. The Bôt opens to the north, its walls are covered with marble slabs and there is a marble colonnade running round it. On the gables of this Bôt, there are images of the God Indra mounted on his many headed elephant Airavata.

The interior walls of the Bôt are painted with scenes from life in Bangkok during the early reigns of the present dynasty. The phra chedi which is of medium height is also covered with



Wat Rajapradisth showing one of the Cambodian Towers and the Bôt.

marble slabs, its upper part ending in a gilt spire. The most interesting of all in this temple are the two Cambodian towers which stand on each side of the Bôt. Both of them are built of marble according to the style of the prangs or towers of ancient Angkor Thom, which used to be a capital of Cambodia and was known for centuries as the Rome of the East. The eastern tower is used as a library where the holy Tripitaka is conserved: while the western one is decorated with beautiful sculptures representing Vishnu riding on the Garuda and the same God resting on the snake Ananda. Above these sculptures are seen on the western tower the four faces of Brahma facing the four

cardinal points. To the east of the temple terrace lies a brick monastery with its entrance facing the Rajini Road which runs alongside Klong Talad. Tourists who can afford the time should pay a visit to this small but fine temple which will leave in their minds a lasting impression of the beauty of Siamese art.



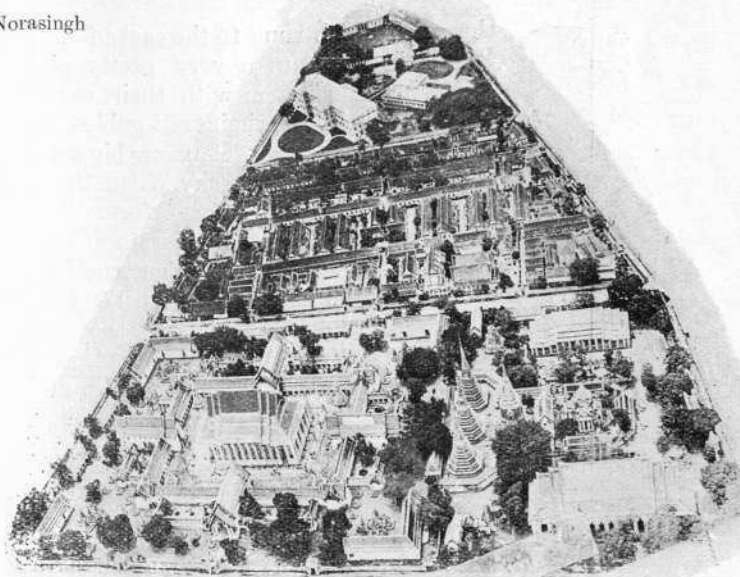
Front view of the Bôt Wat Rajapradisth.



Norasingh



*Wat Phra Jetubon or Wat Po,** so called after a pond mentioned in the life history of Buddha, but popularly known as Wat Po, is the most extensive temple in Bangkok and lies to the south of the Grand



Wat Po from the air.

* Po or Phodi stands for Bodhi, the sacred fig tree.

Palace. When seen

from the Sanam Chai Road, i.e.

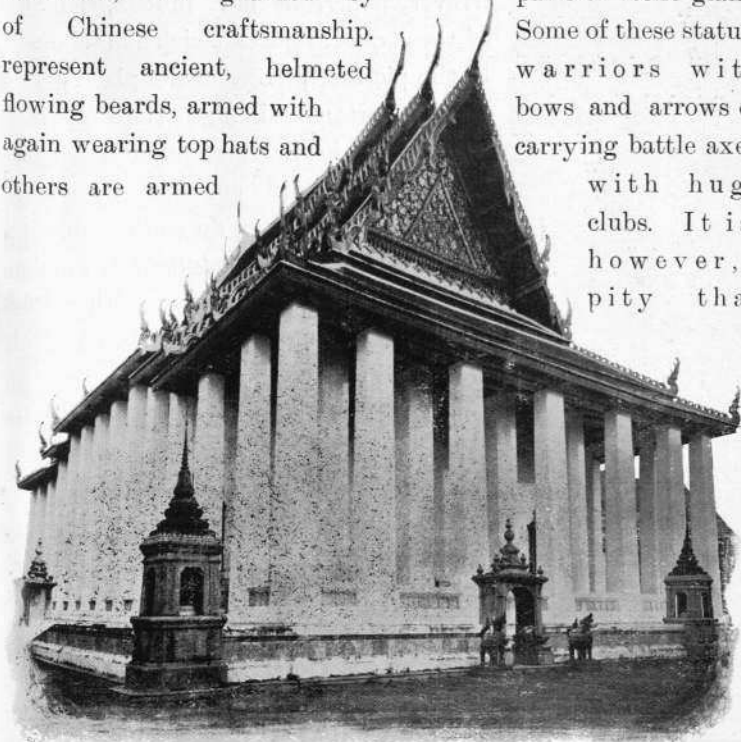
Vihara containing the reclining Buddha.



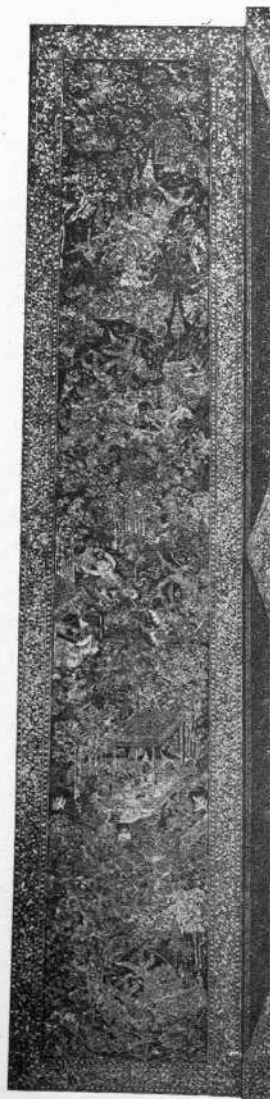
the road which runs to the east of the Grand Palace, it presents a very pretty picture of glittering tiled roofs with their carved and horned ornaments, their gilt gables and the host of slender spires set among big leafy trees pointing towards the sky. Where the present temple stands there was formerly an old temple called Wat Bodharam (the temple of the sacred fig tree). Construction of the modern temple was begun in 1793 by King Rama I. who built most of the buildings now standing, with the exception of the vihara containing the huge reclining image of the Buddha which was built later, during the third reign. The constructions inside the temple enclosure may for the sake of convenience be divided into four groups, viz: the Upasada or Bôt with its galleries, the group of the four great chedis, the

Gentleman of the guard, Wat Po.

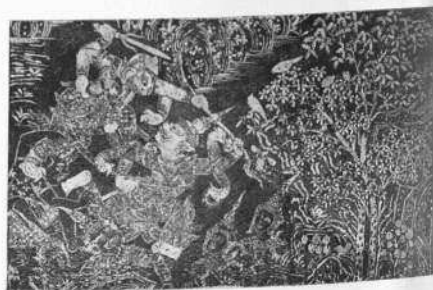
Mandapa and the Vihara of the reclining Buddha and they ought to be visited in the same order. The Bôt lies in a courtyard by itself, while other buildings are enclosed in a second courtyard. The temple buildings stand within a tall brick built wall provided with altogether 16 gates, these gates are surmounted with curiously shaped and tiered spires encrusted with gaudy coloured bits of earthenware resembling the pointed head-dress of the Siamese Lakon actors. On the inside, the gates which can be closed with big and heavy red painted, doors of teakwood, are guarded by pairs of stone giants of Chinese craftsmanship. Some of these statues represent ancient, helmeted warriors with flowing beards, armed with bows and arrows or carrying battle axes, others are armed with huge clubs. It is, however, a pity that



The Bôt, Wat Po.



Massive back door inlaid with mother of pearl.



Inlaid design on the Bôt door. Wat Po.

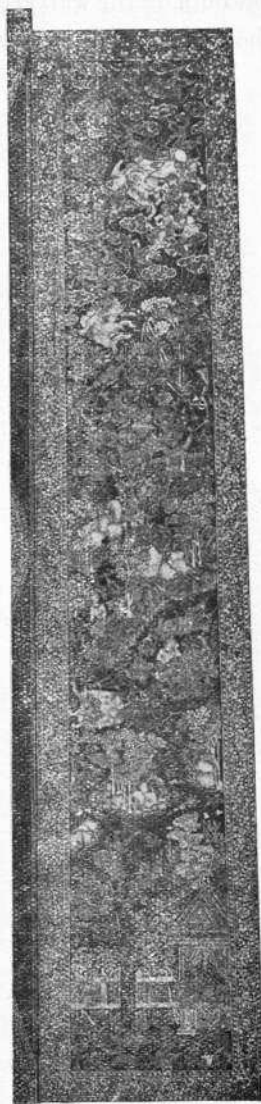
irreverent persons have mutilated many of these queer figures which add so much to the picturesqueness of the place. The most important building is the Bôt which is situated in the middle of a square-formed courtyard enclosed by double galleries that shelter an endless number of sitting images of Buddha (the number of these images being altogether 394, which were all brought down to Bangkok from ruined or deserted temples up country.*) The faces of these galleries are interrupted by four vihara containing big images of the Buddha which we are presently to visit in turn. Having entered the complex from the southern side and penetrated through the double galleries we now find ourselves in the courtyard gazing upon the imposing structure of the Bôt. This is a fine

* Besides there are 30 more images representing either the Master or his disciples, distributed in the Bôt and the chapel.

building with tall whitewashed walls, broken by rows of windows with finely carved and gilt window shutters. A colonnade of lofty square formed pillars runs around the Bôt and supports the three-tiered roof which is covered with glittering red and yellow tiles, the edges of the ends of these roofs being framed with the characteristically carved and pointed "cho-fa." These "cho-fa" are encrusted with patterns of gilt glass and when the sun strikes them they glitter and flash as if emitting lightning when seen from far away. The gables of the Bôt are decorated with ornaments painted in gold which, especially when seen from a distance, have a very happy effect. The Bôt itself is enclosed by a low brick wall pierced with eight small gates, each of these gates being guarded by a pair of bronze lions,



Inlaid design on the Bôt door, Wat Po.



Door panel, Wat Po.

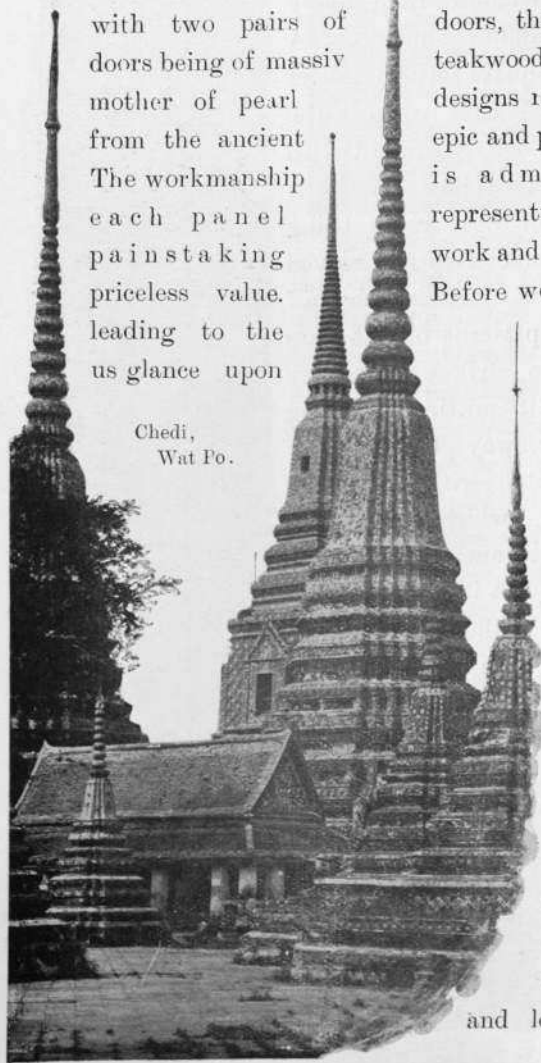
and outside the wall are placed
The eastern and western ends

with two pairs of
doors being of massiv
mother of pearl
from the ancient
The workmanship
each panel
painstaking
priceless value.
leading to the
us glance upon

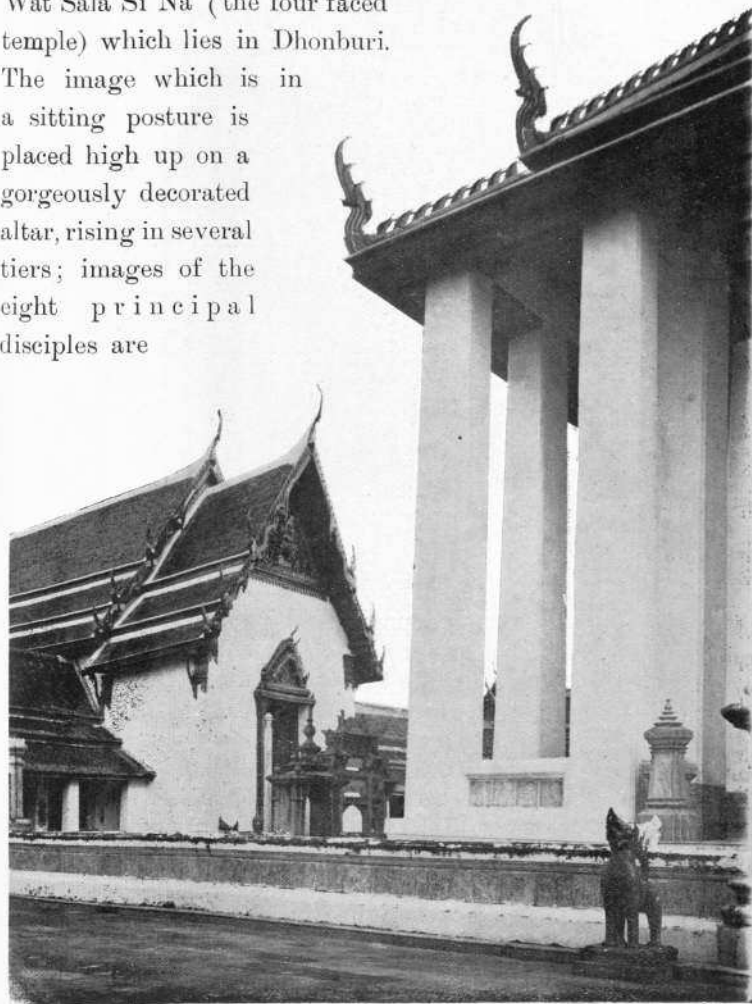
Chedi,
Wat Po.

eight pairs of bai-sema.
of the Bôt are provided
doors, the panels of these
teakwood, inlaid with
designs representing scenes
epic and play of Ramayana.
is admirably done,
representing several years of
work and being therefore of

Before we ascend the steps
eastern doors, let
the ceiling of the
porch. This is
painted red and
ornamented with
patterns of gilt
flowers. To the
right and left are
seen, inside white
discs, the mounted
figures of Phra
Suriya, the Sun
God, and of
Phra Chandra, the
Moon God, which
confront each
other. We now
enter the spacious
and lofty room of the



Bôt which is dominated by the fine gilt bronze image of Buddha.
This image is very old and comes from an ancient temple called
Wat Sala Si Na (the four faced
temple) which lies in Dhonburi.
The image which is in
a sitting posture is
placed high up on a
gorgeously decorated
altar, rising in several
tiers; images of the
eight principal
disciples are



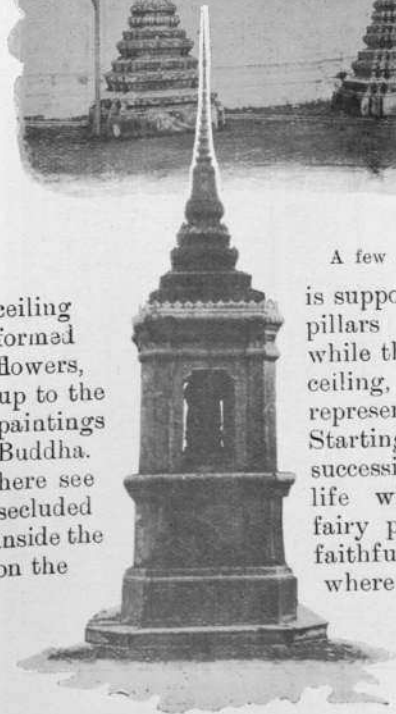
Vihara and the Bôt, Wat Po.

placed on these tiers. This altar is itself much venerated for the reason that some of the bones of King Rama I. the founder of Wat Jetubon are enshrined in it. The red painted and gilt



A few of the numerous chedis of Wat Po.

ceiling formed flowers, up to the paintings Buddha. here see secluded inside the on the



The Pata Sema.

is supported by two rows of square pillars decorated with patterns of while the walls, from the floor right ceiling, are covered with interesting representing scenes from the life of Starting from the eastern wall we successively the birth of Buddha, his life with the beautiful Yasodhara fairy park at Kapilavastu, his flight faithful charger Kandhaka to the jungle where he divests himself of his royal raiment and cuts his flowing locks with his sword and

assumes the humble garb of a begging rishi (hermit) and thereafter his illumination under the bodhi tree in the grove at Gaya where he gains Buddhahood. Continuing along the other walls we see Buddha preaching the law to the five rishis, the kings, peoples,



Statue of Buddha sitting under the Naga.

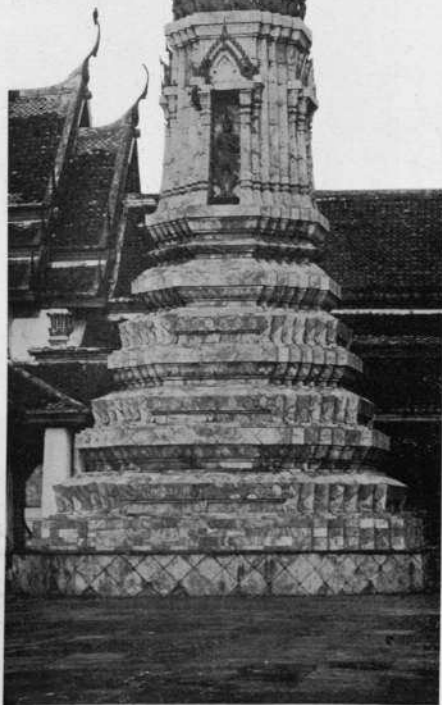


The huge reclining Buddha.

to his own father and wife, and finally we look upon the death

scene in the town Kusinagara. Indeed the devoted student of Buddhism may spend days, even

One of the four prangs surrounding the Bôt.

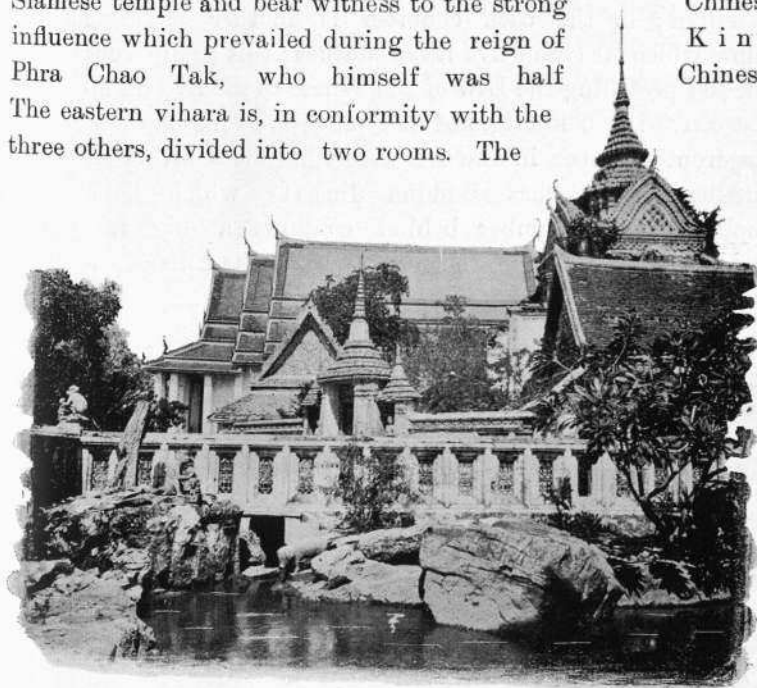


A gilt-door.

weeks, in finding out all the details so faithfully set down here in form and colour. Many of these paintings have been somewhat destroyed by the rainwater penetrating through leaks in the roof. However the paintings are now being carefully repaired and will in due time appear completely restored. Having seen

the Bôt we next visit in turn the four vihara placed in the east, south, west and north. In front of these vihara are seen many objects of Chinese origin such as gates of honour, statues of human beings and animals, big vases, etc., all made of a soft greyish stone. These things look quite incongruous in a Siamese temple and bear witness to the strong Chinese influence which prevailed during the reign of Phra Chao Tak, who himself was half Chinese. The eastern vihara is, in conformity with the three others, divided into two rooms. The

Chinese
King
Chinese.



View taken from the pond with the Vihara of the Reclining Buddha in the background.

foremost contains an enormous standing image of the Buddha, cast in bronze and entirely gilt, in height reaching about 10 metres. This image was brought down from Ayudhya. An inscription on a stone tablet in the wall of this chamber, dated A. D. 1795, gives the cost of construction of the temple at Tcs. 465,440.

The room behind contains an image of Buddha sitting under the Po (Bodhi) tree. This statue was brought down to Bangkok from a hill called Khao Indra at Sawankalok, Siam's capital during a part of the 13th and 14th centuries. We next visit the southern vihara, where in the front chamber we see a sitting image of Buddha called Phra Buddha Jinaraj¹, this image hails from Ayudhya; in the back chamber is another sitting image, below which are seen five lesser statues; this group represents Buddha preaching the Law of the Wheel to the five hermits, his first converts. The origin of this image is so far unknown. In the front chamber in the western vihara is a sitting image of Buddha called Phra Buddha Jinasri² which hails from Lopburi; the chamber behind contains a big image of Buddha sitting under the red tree on the coils of the giant



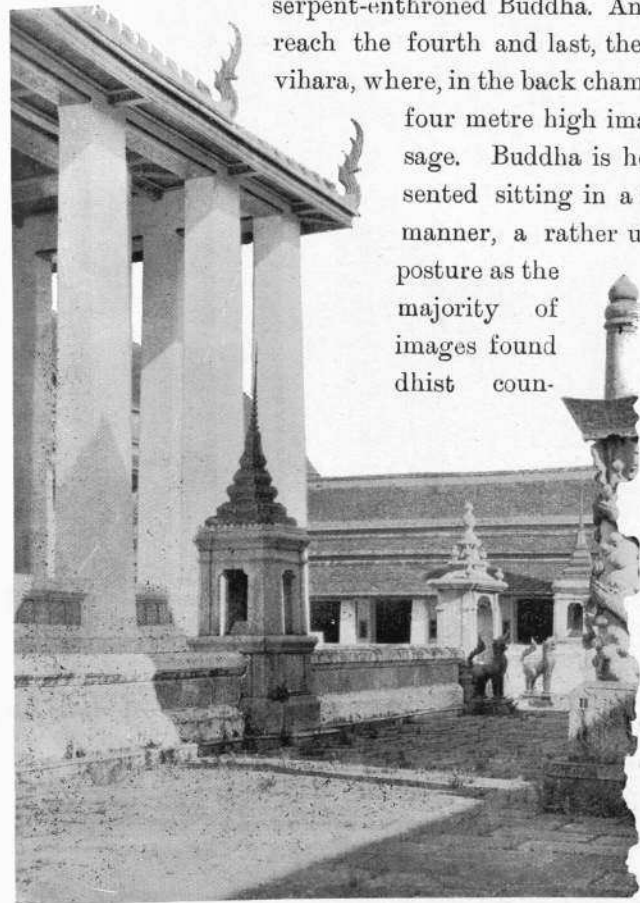
Gallery surrounding the Bôt, Wat Po.

1. Jinaraj means "The Victorious one."
2. Jinasri means "The Glorious Victor."

serpent, the king of the nagas, who, it is told, during a cloud-burst, protected the sage with its outspread hood so well that Buddha was not touched by a single drop of rain. This statue was perhaps brought down from Lopburi, a city famous for its many serpent-enthroned Buddha. And now we reach the fourth and last, the northern vihara, where, in the back chamber, sits a

four metre high image of the sage. Buddha is here represented sitting in a European manner, a rather uncommon posture as the majority of images found in Buddhist countries

always represent him sitting cross legged; an elephant is offering water and a monkey, a beehive to the sage.

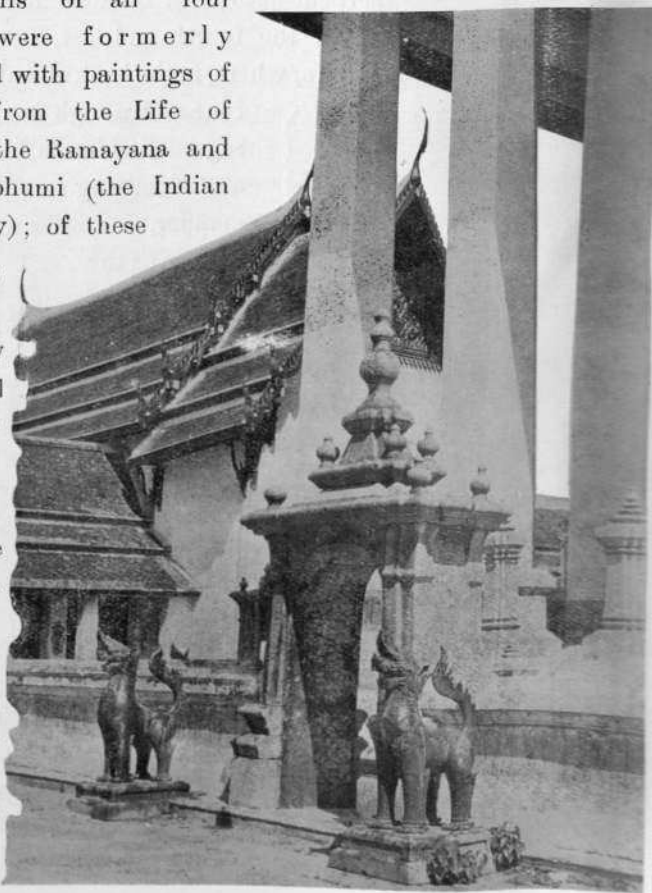


The Terrace.

This last image was cast in Bangkok in 1804. On the door panels of the northern vihara are seen paintings that represent personages who probably may be the Chinese, French, Indian or Persian ambassadors sent to the court of King Phra Narai.

The walls of all four vihara were formerly decorated with paintings of scenes from the Life of Buddha, the Ramayana and the Tribhumi (the Indian cosmology); of these

paintings nothing is now left, all having been destroyed by the rainwater penetrating through leaks in the roofs. In the four corners of the



An entrance to the Bôt.

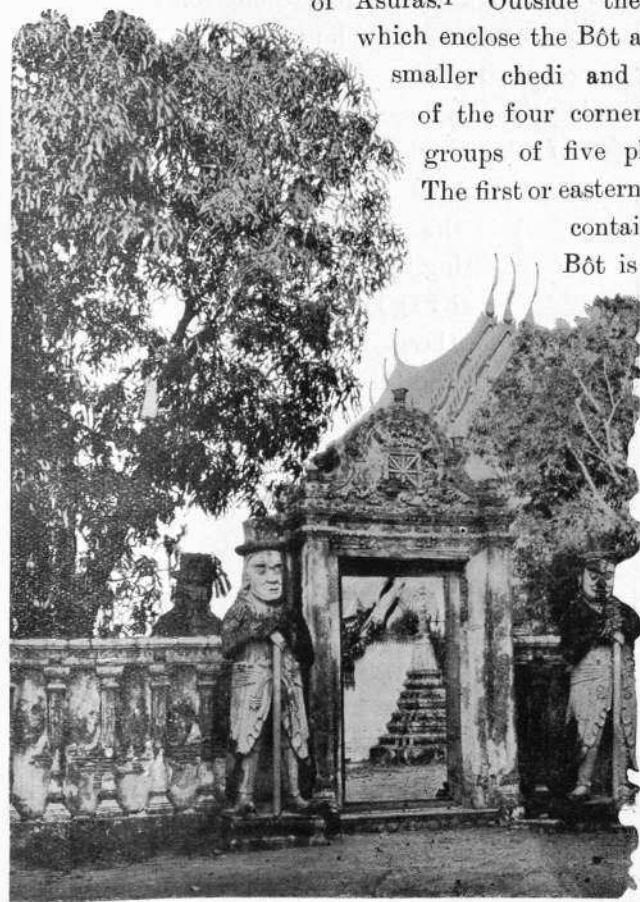
courtyard stand four prangs. These are built of bricks covered with grey marble slabs and crowned with the trichula of the Shiva, while in niches on the four sides of the prangs are seen images

of Asuras.¹ Outside the galleries which enclose the Bôt are rows of

smaller chedi and in each of the four corners are seen groups of five phra chedi.

The first or eastern courtyard containing the Bôt is separated

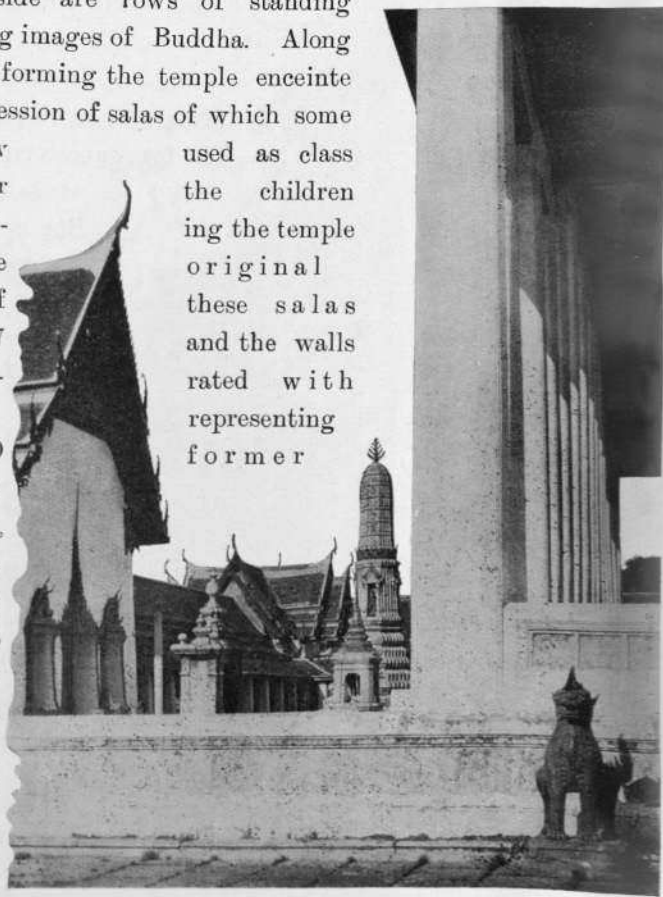
from the other buildings by a wall broken by two gates, guarded by pairs of top-hatted Chinese giants, which are not without a certain



An inner gate of Wat Po guarded by stone statues.

1. Mythical beings.

comical aspect. In the four corners formed by this first courtyard lie small temples built in the form of a semi-rectangle, the roofs are covered with fine coloured tiles and the gables decked with carved and gilt woodwork representing scenes from the *Ramayana*, while inside are rows of standing and sitting images of Buddha. Along the walls forming the temple enceinte are a succession of salas of which some are now used as class rooms for the children frequenting the temple school. The number of these salas was 17 and the walls were decorated with the 550 existences of Buddha, while sitting against the wall were rows of hermits in different postures. Of the paintings



Wat Po, looking from the terrace towards the Bôt and the Vihara.

none are left, and all of the statues have been stolen with the exception of a single one that is now placed on the top of a diminutive artificial mountain in the front of the southern gallery of the Bôt. On the western side of the Bôt, under the shadow of a group of tall leafy trees, is a black linga, the symbol of Shiva. The cults of Buddhism, Brahmanism and Taoism are thus met within the precincts of the same temple. Barren mothers may still be seen praying and offering flowers and sweet-scented water to the gross image of the linga in the hope of being presented with a child. The linga is of Cambodian origin, this somewhat obscene symbol being a remnant of a formerly vigorous cult in Cambodia when Shivaism flourished there some 700 years ago. We now enter the second or western courtyard



Gallery surrounding the Bôt.

and visit the group of the four tall phra chedi lying to the west of the Bôt. Originally there was only one chedi covered with green tiles built by Rama I in the axis of the temple. This contains, deposited in its interior, fragments of an old bronze image from Wat Srisarbej in Ayudhya. The other two, white and yellow, on each side of the original one, were added by Rama III; the fourth, the blue phra chedi, which stands alone, was built by King Mongkut. These four phra chedi are commonly supposed to represent the first four kings of the present dynasty. To the west and close to the group of chedi is a mandapa built in the shape of a blunt cross. On its four faces are chambers preceded by colonnades, the whole surmounted with elaborately designed frontons and a tall spire decorated with patterns of variously coloured bits of crockery. Salas with beautifully ornamented gables surround the mandapa on three sides, the two brick-built gates leading into the small court in which the mandapa stands are surmounted with phra chedi, while in niches on both sides of the doors grim-looking asuras mount guard. This interesting building has fallen much into decay, and visitors are not allowed to enter the courtyard for fear of falling bricks. On each side of the mandapa are small walled ponds in which formerly were kept fish, tortoises and even a crocodile. We now come to the vihara which contains the huge reclining Buddha; the entrance to the building is on the eastern side. The image is 49 metres long and represents Buddha entering Nirvana (B.C. 543). The enormous body which is 12 metres high is made entirely of brick work covered with a thick layer of cement and was formerly gilt in its entire length. The sage supports his head with his right hand,

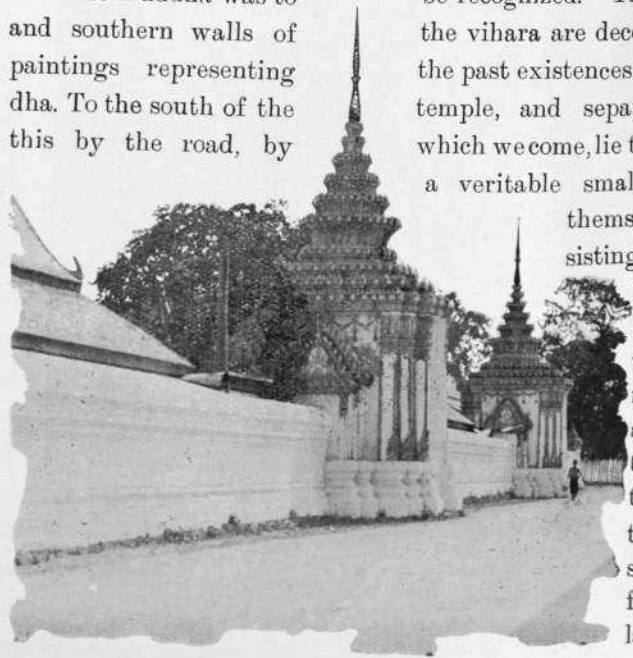


Interior of the Bôt.

The image which is in a sitting posture is placed high up on a gorgeously decorated altar, rising in several tiers.

the left arm being stretched out to its full length alongside the body. The foot-soles of this giant Buddha are covered with curious designs in mother of pearl consisting, in the middle of a

Dharmachakra, the Wheel of the Law, having on both sides rows of square formed spaces containing various figures numbering altogether 106. The common explanation of these figures is that they symbolize the marks and qualities by which the true Buddha was to and southern walls of paintings representing dha. To the south of the this by the road, by



The Main Gate, Wat Po.

be recognized. The northern the vihara are decorated with the past existences of the Buddha-temple, and separated from which we come, lie the cloisters, a veritable small town in themselves, consisting of rows of brick built houses in which the monks live and meditate upon the law of the Philosophers from Kapilavastu.



To the north of the Grand Palace stretches a great open grass-covered ground encircled by a double row of shady tamarind trees. This is the Royal Plaza or the Phra Meru Ground which during the past has been and still is the scene of many splendid pageants and grand state functions, such as Royal Cremations, etc., for which it is eminently suited by reason of its unique site, as it is surrounded by, or is near to, the most important palaces, temples and public buildings of the capital.

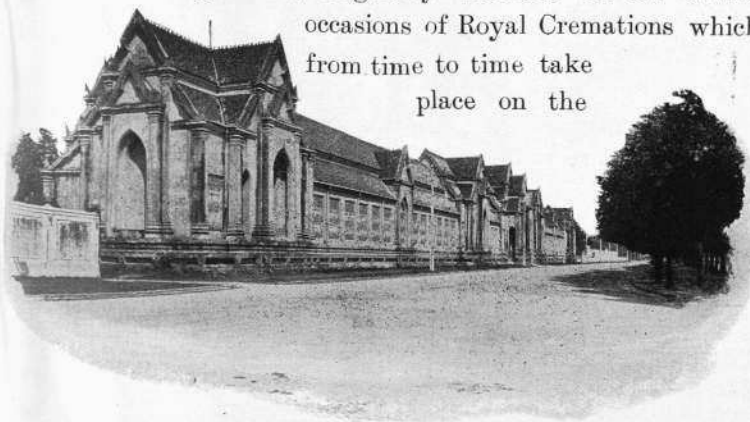
The Royal Plaza is also used for reviews of troops, military tournaments and other big functions of public interest, and here on the occasion of his visit to Siam in December 1921 Field-Marshal Joffre reviewed the Bangkok Garrison, an event of which the Siamese Army is rightfully proud. The Phra Meru Ground is bounded to the south by the Na Phra Lan Road and the white castellated walls of the Palace, to the east by the broad Rajadamnoen Road, on which are the Criminal and the Foreign Causes Courts, to the north by the Klong Talad Extension and to the west by the Academy of Arts, the National Library, Wat Mahathad, the Wang-na, the Museum and the Memorial raised over the remains of Siamese soldiers who died for the great cause during the Great War in Europe. After having visited the palace we leave by the Pratu Vises Jaisri and may now follow the Na Phra Thad Road which, skirting the Phra Meru Ground to the west, passes in front, first the Academy of Arts, a modern building over the gate of which one notices a statue of Visukarma, the Indian God of Art, the counterpart of Hephaistos or Vulcanus of the antique world. Next one comes to the long terra-cotta-coloured building of the *Vajiravudh Library* where we shall soon pay a visit.

Wang Na

In the course of our wandering along the Na Phra Thad Road we come to the walled and castellated enclosure of the *Wang Na* formerly the residence of the Second Kings of Siam. During the first four reigns of the the present dynasty there existed the peculiar institution of a second king, popularly known as the *Wang-Na* (the front palace), the first king, the real lord of the realm being called *Wang Luang* or the chief palace. This institution, which is not to be compared with that of the Twin Kings of Ancient Sparta, had its origin in the troubled state of the country which for more than half a century after the downfall of Ayudhya, was ever being attacked by its hereditary enemies, the Burmese. The second king, who had his own ministers, court and revenues, was destined, as a kind of Generalissimo, to lead the armies against Siam's implacable foes and, to enable him to better fulfil this position, he was invested with Royal Authority. (As a rule he was the younger brother of the reigning king). During the reign of King Chulalongkorn, however, when the modern era of progress was inaugurated, the institution of the second king was done away with; the last one died in 1885. Nowadays the walled enclosure of the *Wang-na* is used to house the National Museum.

The National Library

The National Library was founded in 1905 by amalgamating several smaller state libraries into one. It is now a section of the Royal Institute of Literature, Archaeology and Fine Arts established by a Royal Decree of April 19, 1926, and is, in the customary way, divided into two departments, viz: Printed Books, and Manuscripts. At first the library had its place inside the Grand Palace, but as the collection of books and manuscripts grew bigger the demand for more spacious premises became imperative, and in 1917 it was transferred to the building in front of Wat Mahathad. This building, which is in the style of the old Khmer galleries, originally intended for use on the occasions of Royal Cremations which from time to time take place on the

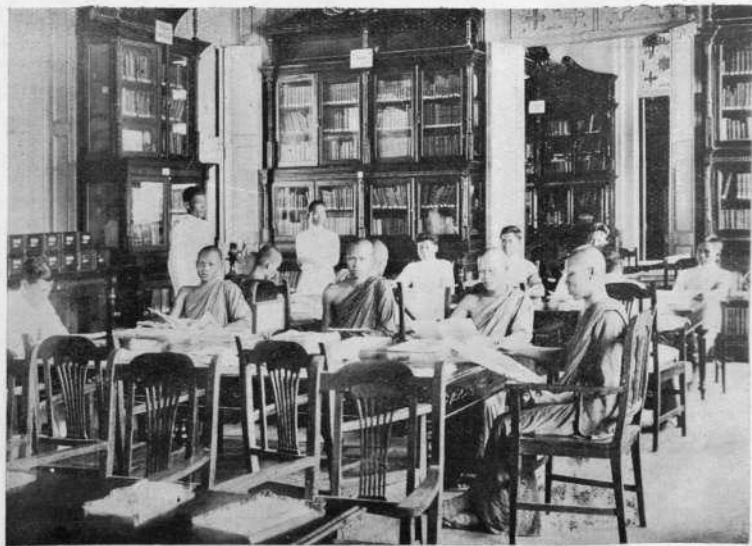


The Building of the Vajiravudh Library along the Na Phra Thad Road.

NOTE. This section on the National Library is compiled by the Information Bureau, Royal State Railways of Siam, from manuscripts written by Major Seidentaden and pamphlets issued by the Royal Institute.

Royal Plaza, contains a succession of rooms bordered on the back by a long corridor. This building now houses the department of Printed Books which is called the Vajiravudh Library in memory of H.M. King Maha Vajiravudh or Rama VI, whose collection of books was, after His demise, handed over to the National Library. This department is divided into two sections, Siamese and Foreign (including European, Chinese, Sanskrit books, etc). Maps of every description are incorporated in this department, and a special section of pictorial records comprises drawings, pictures, and photographs of eminent persons or of objects of interest.

The public have free access to the Vajiravudh Library and can make use of several reading-rooms, one of which is specially reserved for the readers of newspapers and magazines, both Siamese and foreign.

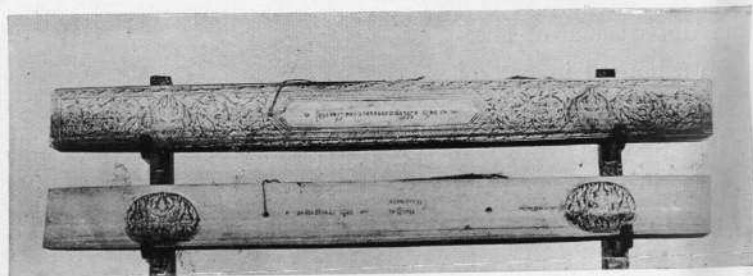


A reading room in the Vajiravudh Library

The department of Manuscripts housed in one of the buildings of the Museum is called the Vajirayan Library, in memory of the name borne by King Mongkut when he was in the priesthood, before his accession to the throne. The collection of Cambodian Pali Manuscripts in the Vajirayan Library is certainly the richest in the world. They are kept in magnificent lacquer and gilt bookcases, which are the chief objects of interest



Along a corridor, the National Library. to be seen in the Library by the passing visitors. The collection of Siamese manuscripts is also unrivalled in any other country. It comprises prayer books, religious works and works of literature, history, as well as technical treatises, books of law, and even archives. These manuscripts, which are considered the most interesting for the visitor to see, either on account of their artistic value or because they are representative of a special class of work, are exhibited in a series of show-cases. The big majority of the manuscripts only date back as far as the latter part of the 18th century, all older documents having perished in the flames when the Burmese invaders wantonly destroyed the old capital of Ayudhya in 1767.

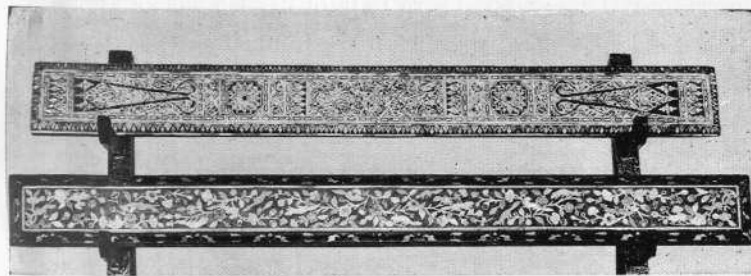


Books made of Palm leaves on which the Buddhist Doctrines are written.

The manuscripts are divided into five sections, viz: Pali manuscripts, religious and profane literature, historical literature (including archives) and sciences (such as astronomy, war, medicine, etc.) of which a complete catalogue is now under way. The Library has already done a stupendous work in gathering together copies of all sorts of manuscripts, whether on palm leaves or on paper, and thereby saved from destruction most valuable records and preserved them for



An old book case, side view.



The plates used as covers for palm leaf books are often a real work of art.



An old book case, front view.

future generations and has also, in supervising the publication and printing of books, done and still does the country and science great services. Since 1904 it has been the custom that relatives of a deceased person distribute at his or her cremation books as souvenirs to friends who come and take part in the ceremonies. While some of these books are purely religious, historical and literary works are also published in steadily increasing numbers, thereby spreading and diffusing the knowledge of many hitherto unknown works of considerable historical or literary

importance. Those who desire to publish such works apply to the National Library whereupon the Council selects a suitable work from among the manuscripts so far unpublished. In Siam as in the countries professing the Ceylonese Buddhism,* the pali text of the Buddhist doctrines are written on palm leaves supplied by the corypha or lan palm, a species of wild palm with broad fan shaped leaves which is found both in northern and eastern Siam. After the leaves have been cut and trimmed into the necessary size, the scribe begins his work of inscribing them; this is done with the help of a stylus which scratches the letters into the surface of the leaf. The scribe having finished his work, the leaves are treated first with soot and thereafter wiped clean and scoured with sand, the result of this process being that the letters stand out clearly on a yellow surface. Next the leaves are placed in a press and the edges trimmed



An old book, made of "Khoi" paper.

* The Ceylonese Buddhism is called Hinayana, *i. e.*, "the smaller wheel of the law" as opposed to Mahayana "the great wheel" or the Thibetan form of Buddhism; the correct name should in reality be the pali canon and the sanskrit canon respectively. The latter form of Buddhism is by no means the greater, for, on the contrary, it is now universally admitted among the savants that the texts of the pali Buddhism are by far the most pure and authentic ones.



A leaf taken out from an old Siamese book, a text for boxing.

up and sometimes gilded. The leaves are formed into volumes by tying them together by a string running through holes in the middle of the leaf, each leaf is usually written on both sides. A book consists generally of 12 and a double book of 24 leaves; these books or bundles are often contained between two plates and wrapped in cloth. The plates are sometimes real works of art, being made of lacquered teakwood adorned with gold designs or inlaid with mother of pearl, or they may be made of carved ivory, of silver or other precious metal. Some exquisite specimens are exhibited in the showcases in the library. The cloth in which the books are wrapped is often of material which had been garments of deceased persons. Some of these cloths kept in the library are of very beautiful and delicate patterns as will be seen from the specimens exhibited in the glass covered frames standing in the rooms where the book cases, containing the manuscripts, are placed. These cases made for the purpose of keeping religious

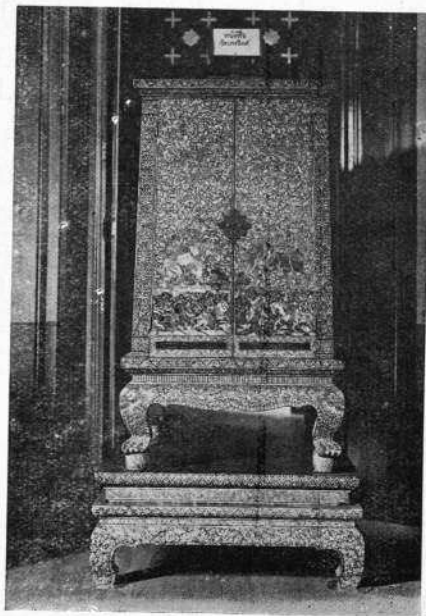


Old lapidary inscriptions.

manuscripts are one of the most characteristic and interesting productions of Siamese art and are, at least for the occasional visitor, the chief objects of interest to be seen in the National Library. The cases are made of teakwood and the four sides have always that trapezoid shape which is a prominent feature of modern Siamese architecture (to be observed especially in the windows of temples). Some of them are erected on a kind of pedestal or carved base but generally they stand on four legs. The doors as well as the sides are nearly always lacquered in black on which are painted in gold, various scenes representing the Life of Buddha or his former existences, episodes from the Ramayana, Indian Deities or historical events. The most characteristic decoration is the "kranok" which is said to be derived from the stylised rice-flower. Some few cases have carved doors, and sides and incrustation with glass ware is also

met with, but the ones giving the finest effect are those cases that are inlaid with mother of pearl into a deep layer of lacquer. Though this art may have been introduced from China it has long ago acquired a distinctively Siamese form. The library possesses altogether over 400 bookcases of different sizes and patterns. The collection of Cambodian pali manuscripts in the library is certainly the richest in the world (Cambodian pali manuscripts are understood to be pali manuscripts written in Cambodian letters, *i.e.* the very same letters from which the modern Siamese alphabet was evolved) but, as was said earlier, most of them are of comparatively recent date. Still, the library possesses some manuscripts dating back prior to the destruction of Ayudhya, the oldest of these being from 1440

A. D. Several complete collections of the Tripitaka ("the three baskets" of the Buddhist Religion) written on palm leaves are preserved as well as the famous jubilee edition published in book form by King Chulalongkorn. Besides the palm leaf literature there is also a big collection of Siamese books. These are made of thick white or yellowish paper folded backwards



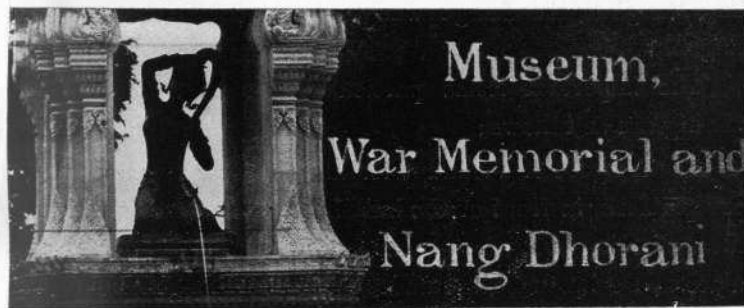
Book case inlaid with Mother of Pearl.



An old Siamese Book.

matters, and very often they are illustrated with sketches or coloured pictures. Some of these works are real handbooks (tamrā) on war, shipbuilding, alchemy, astrology, magic, architecture, medicine, etc. In the galleries of the Library there are a considerable number of old inscriptions on stone. These inscriptions are either in Sanskrit, Cambodian, Mon or Thai. The oldest one hails from Lopburi and is probably in a kind of archaic Mon, the date being 6th-7th century A. D.

and forwards into "accordion pleats." The paper is made of the bark of the khoi tree. Sometimes the surface of the paper in these books is blackened, the text being written with a white or yellow chalkstick. The contents of these books are of religious, literary (such as poetry, fiction and drama), historical, technical or legal



The Museum as stated is sheltered in the halls belonging to the Wang-na.

It is open to the public daily between 10 and 16 o'clock. On week days there is a charge of Tcs. 1.00 per person. This charge includes fees for a guide supplied by the Museum.

On Sunday the Museum is open free to the public from 10 to 17 o'clock.

The collections of the Museum are exhibited in the following order :

THE BUDDHAISVARYA BUILDING.

This building dates back to the time of the first Second King, about 1795. It was constructed for the famous Image of the Buddha, Phra Buddha Sihinga, which is still to be seen in the building. After the death of the first Second King, the Image was removed to the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in the Grand Palace, and the building was used only occasionally for ceremonial purposes. In the Fourth Reign, by order of

NOTE. The section on Museum is compiled by the Railway Information Bureau from a pamphlet published by the Royal Institute.

King Mongkut, the Image was returned to its first home in Bangkok.

The important items particularly to be noticed in this building are as follows :

1) A figure of Vishnu wielding the Bow standing on the open platform in front of the building. This figure was cast by order of King Chulalongkorn, and was intended for H. M.'s Palace at Petchaburi, then under construction. The figure was, however, not ready in His Majesty's time ; nor, as a matter of fact, was the Palace.

2) A large Bell. This is placed behind item No. 1. It is probably the largest bell to be found in this country, and was made by order of King Mongkut for sounding the hour under the clock tower near H. M.'s New Royal Residence.

3) The Buddha's Image, Phra Buddha Sihinga, above referred to. It is recorded in history that this image was made more than 670 years ago.

4) Siamese Water-Colour Drawings on the walls, done at the time the building was constructed. They have never been restored, and thus exhibit valuable specimens of the art of the First Reign.

5) Two Standing Images of the Buddha, behind the principal image, said to have been made in memory of the two maternal uncles of King Mongkut. It is not known where they came from, but they were placed in the building by the fourth Second King.

6) Three Large Bookcases, with pictures representing scenes from the Ramayana. These were made by order of the third Second King. The artists who painted the pictures on

these cases are said to have been among the best of their time.

7) Buddhist Votive Tablets, in four show cases. These contain specimens of every period, and were collected originally by the Council of the National Library, by whom they were presented to the Museum.

8) Vinichai Bheri Drum used during the Reign of King Rama III for people to sound on making petition to the King.

THE ISARAVINICHAI HALL.

The site on which this Hall was built by the third Second King, was originally an open space with rows of open buildings on three sides. In one of those buildings, which formed a projection into the square, the first Second King and his immediate successor gave general audiences ; that is to say, they came out from the inner parts of their Palace at certain times of the day, and noblemen and others who had a right of audience, came to the reception. On such occasions, reports were submitted, orders given, and, in the case of the Supreme Head of the State, even laws passed.

Such audiences, then, were granted by the first and second Second Kings on the site on which this Hall now stands. It was here also that learned men gathered for scholastic work, and it is recorded that the Ceylon Chronicle, the Mahavansa, was translated into Siamese by a body of Pali Scholars assembled here.

The Hall was built by the third Second King as his Throne Hall, and was used as such until the death of the last Second King.

The following items should be noticed :—

1. A Throne standing at the West End of the Hall, opposite the main entrance. The Throne was built by the first Second King, but, in his time, it stood in the open building where he gave his daily audience.

Exhibits in this Hall are bronze figures and castings, included in which will be found the following important items:

(a) Figures of Hindu Gods and Goddesses, made during the Sukhothai and Ayudhya periods. They are all of Siamese workmanship, and form a collection which is distinctly unique.

(b) Bronze articles of Khmer workmanship, in several show-cases. Many of these are important and unique specimens.

(c) Images of the Buddha, the Bodhisattva, and other gods arranged in cases on the two sides (East and West) of the building. These specimens date back to the periods of Dvaravati, Sri Vijay, Lobpuri, Ayudhya, and also Bangkok. Specimens of foreign workmanship are also to be found in the collection.

(d) A Footprint of the Buddha in bronze, made at Sukhothai, and a Head of the Buddha, made at Kambaeng Bejra, are placed to the South of the Throne. There is also a Bronze Bull brought from the Temple of the Footprint. To the North of the Throne a Head of the Buddha from Chiangmai, one of the largest specimens of its kind, should be inspected.

THE OUTER WING.

Here are arranged specimens of stone figures, etc. among which the following items are to be noticed :

1. A large Stone Ganesa found at Singhasari (in Java) and presented to King Chulalongkorn on one of His Majesty's visits to Java.

2. To the South of the building will be found stone figures, etc. from India, and also stone articles of the Dvaravati and Sri Vijay periods, brought from Phra Pathom and Jaiya. To the North are arranged exhibits showing the stone work of the period of Lobpuri.

3. Large specimens of stone figures, heads, etc. are to be seen around the *Viman Group* of buildings. On the South, specimens of Dvaravati and Sri Vijay, and those acquired by King Chulalongkorn from Java. On the North, specimens of Khmer work from Lobpuri, Korat and Angkor: also specimens of Siamese workmanship during the period of Sukhothai.

THE VIMAN GROUP.

It is an old tradition, based no doubt on comfort and convenience, that a King's Palace should contain three living buildings. It is possible that, originally, it meant three Palaces. The three buildings are designed for the hot season, the rainy season, and the cold season. In Ayudhya the Royal Palace was a group of three buildings, and in Bangkok, the Residence of the Supreme Monarch used to be comprised of three groups of buildings. If a Royal Residence contains only one group of houses, it is a group of three. Thus the Viman Group in the Second King's Palace is a group of three buildings. The first Second King built for his own residence a group of houses, whose names indicate the season for which each building is intended, the whole being styled the Viman Group. Apart from the three main buildings, a number of wings were built;

the spaces between the main buildings and the wings are roofed over, and again called wings. There are six wings in all and they, as well as the main buildings, now form part of the National Museum.

THE FRONT WING.

In this building, vehicles, sedans, howdahs, etc. Royal and others, are arranged, and the following items are to be noticed:

1. Royal State Chair on which the King was borne in procession on his Coronation.
2. Another State Chair used by the King on other occasions, when borne in full State.
3. A third State Chair for bearing the King on minor State occasions.
4. Royal Howdahs for the King and the Royal Ladies.
5. State Chair of the late Supreme Patriarch, used when His Royal Highness was borne on State occasions.
6. A mother-of-pearl inlaid Howdah, understood to belong originally to a Chief of Viengchand.

THE SOUTHERN WING.

This wing is used to display exhibits in connection with the Drama. The following items are to be noticed:

1. Marionette Masks mostly made by famous craftsmen during the Second Reign, with a few others made in the Fourth Reign.
2. Marionette Figures made for the fifth Second King.
3. Theatrical Masks and Head Dresses made by the late Chao Phya Mahindra, in two showcases.

THE EASTERN WING.

The first Second King died in this wing. It is now used for the display of musical instruments. This and the southern wing are provided with raised floors, and differ from the other wings in this respect. The raised floors are accounted for by the fact that the third Second King did not occupy the main building, but lived in these wings.

THE VAYU STHAN BUILDING.

This is the central building of the Viman group, with a smaller building on each side of it. As its name indicates, it was intended for occupation in the cold season, being shut off from the wind on either side. The second Second King died here, and it was later used to keep the ash-remains of the earlier Second Kings until their removal (in the Sixth Reign) to a building within the precincts of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

The exhibits to be noticed here are as follows:

1. A statue of King Chulalongkorn, a plaster cast of the statue standing in the Royal Mausoleum.

The stand on which the statue is placed is an old piece of work belonging to the Ayudhya period, recently brought from Jaiya.

2. State Chairs made by order of the fifth Second King for his own use.
3. Royal Seat of the fourth Second King for everyday use. It is believed that this style of seat was used only by the Supreme Monarch. This exhibit, however, was made for the fourth Second King, who, contemporaneously with King Mongkut, enjoyed the sovereign title conferred on him by his Royal Brother.

4. On each side of item No. 3, placed against the walls, is a Royal State Chair made in the Fifth Reign, and a Royal Howdah of some antiquity.

5. The Throne of the fourth Second King occupies the middle of the building. It has only recently been moved from the Isaravinichai Throne Hall. There was a seven-tiered white umbrella over it.

6. On one side of No. 5, against the wall, stands a miniature five-spined house, made in the Fourth Reign for Royal ash-remains; on the other side are two folding chairs belonging to the King and the Second King of the First Reign. These chairs accompanied the two Royal Brothers on their travels also, it is believed, on their campaigns.

7. A larger structure than No. 6, of similar character with a three-tiered roof, made in the First or Second Reign and differing in design from any other similar structure in existence. The ash-remains of the first, second and third Second Kings were kept on this stand until they were moved to their present place. It is surmised that originally this exhibit stood in the Brahmes Building (to be referred to) and were moved to this Building in the Fourth Reign.

8. At the back of the Building, against the wall on the North, a Royal Seat of the King of Dhonburi, found at, and brought from, Muang Klaeng; on the South, a Royal Seat of the fifth Second King.

THE BACK WING.

Here ancient weapons and warlike articles are displayed.

1. Model of an elephant with full Royal equipment.

2. In two large cases, on each side of the steps leading from the Vayu Sthan Building, war flags are shown.

3. Model of a horse with a complete set of harness (Burmese style), which belonged to the fourth Second King.

4. A set of three drums which belonged to the third Second King is in the North corner of the wing; another set of three drums is in the South corner. The latter set of drums formerly occupied a three-storied house opposite the Jetubon Monastery. The largest drum, hung on the lowest storey, was sounded at sunrise and sunset—a signal to open and close the city gates respectively. The middle drum, hung on the middle storey, was sounded when there was a fire. The smallest drum, hung on the top storey, would be sounded if an enemy came before the gates; it was never sounded.

THE NORTHERN WING.

The exhibits displayed in this wing are armaments used in modern warfare.

THE WESTERN WING.

The exhibits here are old coins, medals and stamps; also gifts presented by foreigners to the Kings; exhibits relating to the history of the Railway in Siam.

THE OUTER BACK WING (on the West).

Ancient and important specimens of Siamese wood-carving are displayed here.

1. An ancient Pulpit, presented to the Museum by the King.
2. A pavilion, for priests to sit and recite prayers, brought over from Wat Yai in Petchaburi.

3. Carved Bow of a Barge made in the Third Reign.
4. Carved Bow and Stern of a Royal Barge made in the Third Reign.

5. Carved Bow of a Royal Barge representing Vishnu on Garuda. It was made in the Third Reign, and originally had the figure Garuda only; Vishnu was added in the Fourth Reign.

The bodies of the Barges have all disappeared: only their important parts have been preserved.

THE VASANTA BIMAN BUILDING.

This Building stands on the South, and it was here that the Accession Ceremony of His Majesty Phra Pin Klao, the fourth Second King, took place. The Building is now utilized for the display of old Furniture.

1. A Royal Bedstead brought to the Museum recently from the Arun Monastery. It is presumed that it was the Bedstead of Her Majesty Queen Sri Suriyendra, Mother of King Mongkut and Phra Pin Klao. After the demise of her Royal Husband, the Queen lived with her younger son at his Palace near the Arun Monastery, and died in the Third Reign. Her house was taken down and rebuilt within the precincts of a Monastery as an act of merit, and her Bedstead presumably was presented to the neighbouring Monastery. It was found to be too large and ornamental for use by the monks, and was dismantled and put away for about 90 years.

2. Crockery of Siamese designs made to Siamese order in the Second Reign.

3. Brass vessels and household articles of many kinds, many of which are ancient specimens. The collection is a large one.

4. Water-colour Paintings of Historical Subjects. The pictures were painted by order of King Chulalongkorn, with poems describing the scenes written by poets selected by His Majesty. Many pictures of the same set still hang in the Palace at Bang Pa-In.

On the ground floor of this building there are exhibits of old porcelain and pottery.

In front of the northern staircase are models of carts, boats, etc.

In front of the eastern staircase are ancient collections of terra-cotta, stucco, etc.

THE BRAHMES BUILDING.

In the absence of historical records to the contrary, it is surmised that this building was used as a place of worship by its first owner, the first Second King. After his death, his ash-remains were kept here until the Fourth Reign, when they were removed to the Centre Building.

Exhibits in the Building are mostly those which relate to the Buddhist Religion.

1. Mother-of-pearl inlaid work.
2. Ivory work, among which is a box for holding a gold tablet on which a Royal Letters Patent appointing a Supreme Patriarch is inscribed.

3. Fans indicative of Ecclesiastical Ranks, and other Fans used by the monks. One of the exhibits is the identical fan used by the fourth Second King when His Majesty entered the Monkhood; it was later used by King Chulalongkorn on His Majesty's entrance into the Novitiate, and was again used by Prince Maha Vajirunahis, who was then Crown Prince.

On the ground floor of this building are exhibits of official dress and old cloths.

In front of the western staircase leading to the Brahmes Buildings are curiosities and pre-historic implements.

In front of the eastern staircase there is an important exhibit, viz., a temple door inlaid with Mother-of-pearl, made in the latter part of the Ayudhya period. Also the original doors (two) of the present Royal Mausoleum.

WAR MEMORIAL AND NANG DHORANI FOUNTAIN.

At the northern extremity of the Royal plaza, lies a small exquisite *monument* built in form of a dazzling white chedi containing the ashes of the Siamese soldiers who died in Europe during the Great War. Before crossing the bridge which spans Klong Talad into the extension of Rajadamnoen Avenue, let us stop and cast a glance on the *fountain* nearby. The statue placed in the pavilion here, represents Nang Dhorani, the goddess of earth, whose picture is seen painted on the eastern wall in the Bôt of Wat Phra Keo; the only difference is that there she creates a rushing flood of water with which to drive away the host of the evil tempter Marâ, while here the water is used for quenching the thirst of way-faring people. This fountain was erected by Her Late Majesty, the Queen Mother.



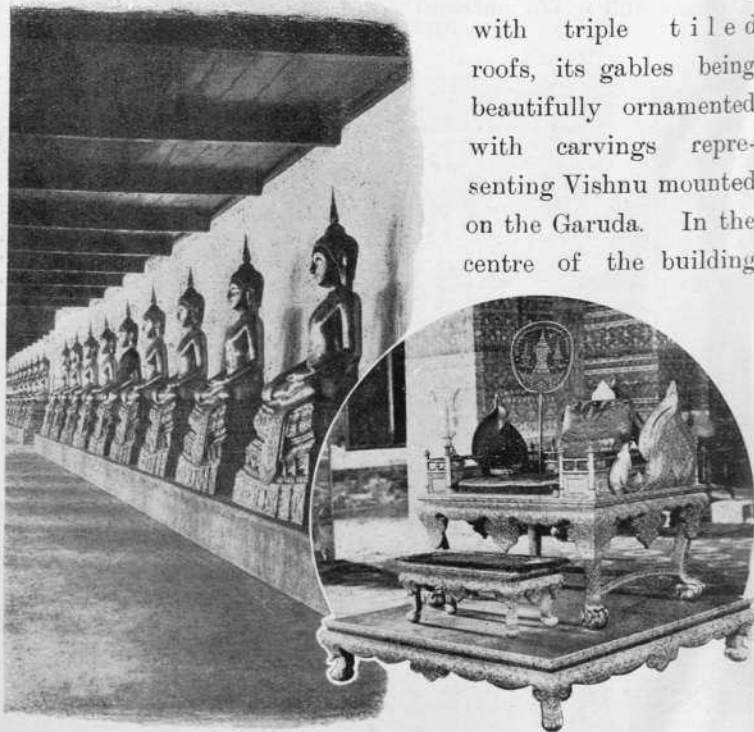
Behind the Vajiravudh Library lies Wat Mahathad (the Temple of the Great Relic Shrine). This temple is the oldest of the religious buildings lying on the east bank of the Menam and was in existence long before Bangkok was made the capital of Siam. It consists of three temple buildings, viz: a mondhab, a vihara, and a bôt enclosed by square formed galleries. On



Interior of the Bôt, Wat Mahathad,

the extensive ground stretching behind the temple, and to the south of the same, lie the buildings of the cloister, a pali school and other buildings destined for the use of its yellow robed inhabitants. The galleries are closed to the exterior but open to the courtyard, thus following the general rule of other gallery-enclosed temples in Bangkok. In the sombre corridors of these galleries sit 112 gilt images of the Buddha. The mondlob

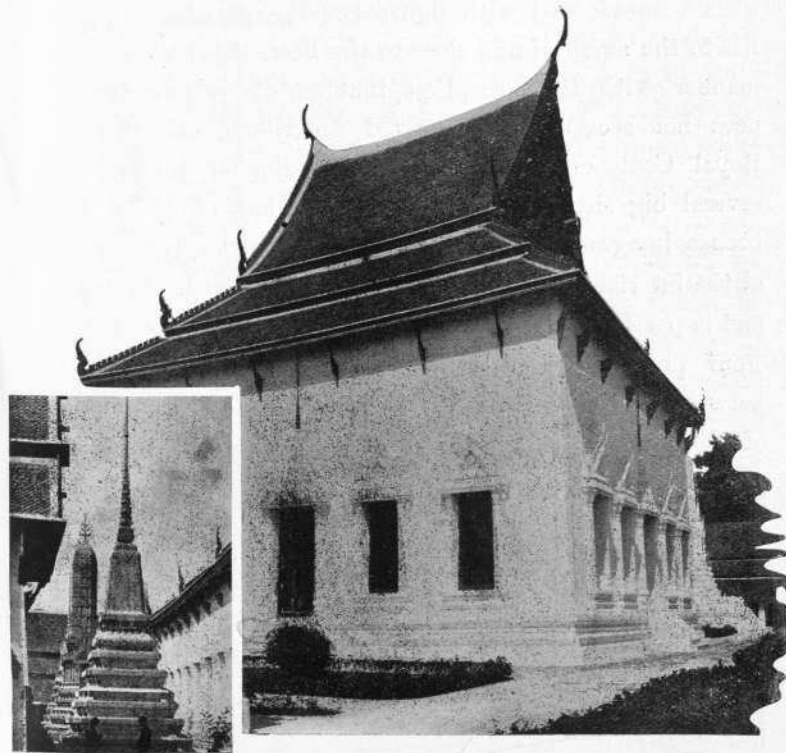
is a tall square building with triple tiled roofs, its gables being beautifully ornamented with carvings representing Vishnu mounted on the Garuda. In the centre of the building



Statues of Buddha in the Gallery of Wat Mahathad.

A Pulpit.

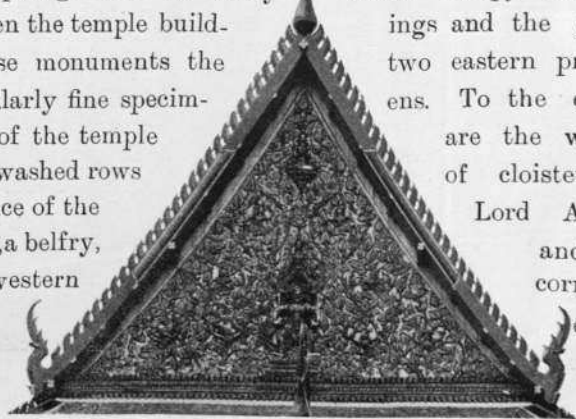
rises a partly gilt phra chedi said to contain a precious relic; this chedi is surrounded by an interior colonnade. Behind the mondlob lies the Bôt and the vihara, the Bôt being the larger of these two buildings; its beautiful gables are adorned in the same manner as those of the mondlob. The interior of the Bôt is divided into three naves by two long rows of lofty square-formed columns; in the central nave sits in the background



The Mondlob Wat Mahathad.

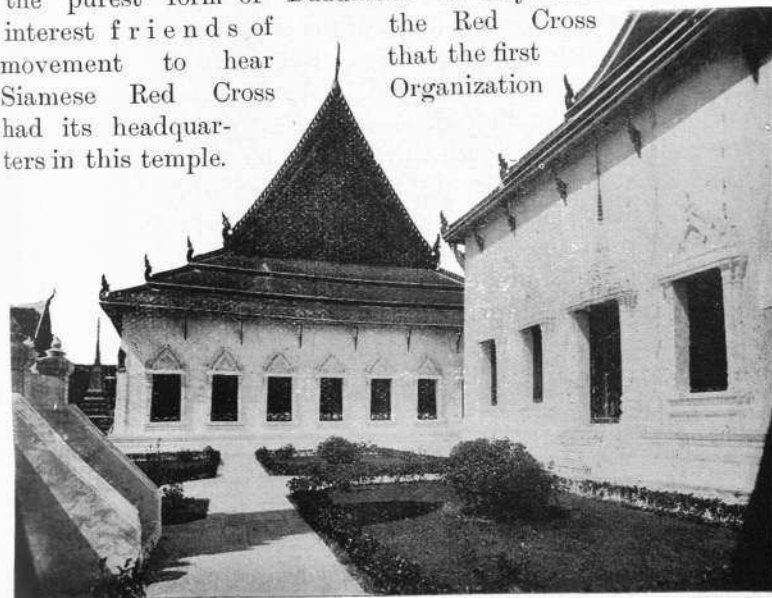
Prang and Chedi which occupy a space between the Bôt and the gallery.

an enormous gilt image of the Buddha surrounded by his eight chief disciples, Mogallana, Sariputra, Ananda, Rahula and others; on the wooden window-shutters are painted representations of Devaputras. The "bai-sema" are not as is usually the case, put up outside the Bôt but are encased in its very walls, four on the interior side, the other four being placed on the exterior corners of the building. These "bai-sema" are adorned with figures of the garuda. The vihara lies to the north of and close to the Bôt. It is built in a similar manner with the exception that on its eastern gable one does not see Vishnu mounted on the garuda but a big Royal Coat of Arms. In the interior of the vihara are several big sitting images of Buddha, two of which are cast bronze images brought down from Lopburi. The remainder of the interior of this building is filled with old bookcases and is partly used as an annex to the National Library. Four prangs and as many chedis occupy the space between the temple buildings and the galleries; two eastern prangs are particularly fine specimens. To the east and south of the temple are the well kept white-washed rows of cloisters, the residence of the Lord Abbot, a belfry, and in the north-western corner of the walled enclosure lies the new



Gable of the Bôt, Wat Mahathad.

and fine building of the pali college which in rank comes next to that of Wat Debsirindr. In the north-eastern corner of the enclosure grows an enormous bodhi tree planted from seeds brought hither from Anuruddhapura by a commission of Siamese monks who in 1814 to 1818 sojourned in Ceylon to study the pali canon there. (Another bodhi tree also planted from these seeds still exists in the compound of Wat Jetubon). Wat Mahathad is famous for two reasons, firstly because here assembled in 1788 the great religious council which after long and painstaking work purified and re-established what is now the standard edition of the Siamese tripitaka, at present kept in Wat Phra Keo, secondly because in this temple King Mongkut also resided for a long time as Lord Abbot and here established the Order of Dharma Yudika monks which, as has been proved by recent research, represents the purest form of Buddhism. It may also interest friends of the Red Cross movement to hear that the first Siamese Red Cross Organization had its headquarters in this temple.



Terrace surrounding the Bôt Wat Mahathad.

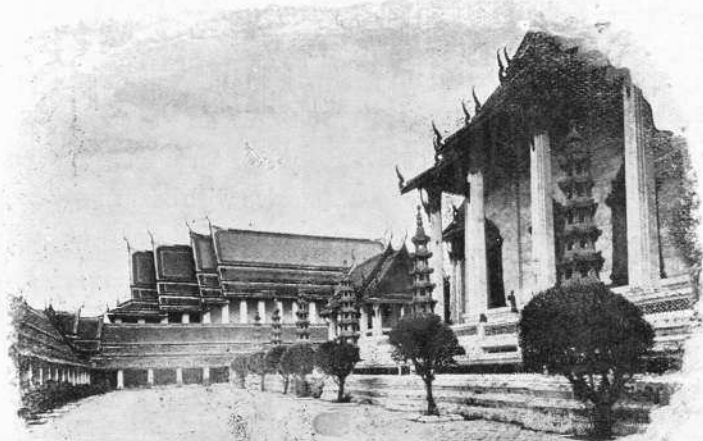


Lak Muang

Before leaving the Royal Plaza and its neighbourhood attention may be drawn to a small monument which lies between the Ministry of Defense and the Criminal Court, partly hidden by the big leafy tamarind trees that surround it. This is the Lak Muang, a small square formed brick building surmounted by a tall prang or spire identical with those which crown the entrances to the Palace. Inside this building stands a carved wooden column: The Phra Lak Muang, literally "the pillar of the city", and the protecting angel of the city is supposed to dwell inside this pole; surrounding it are a lot of votive offerings representing devatas or human beings. Every town in Siam, and for the matter of that in the whole of Central and Eastern Asia, possesses its Lak Muang which is the shrine of the local genius or spirit that is considered to be the owner of the place on which the town is built and accordingly plays the role of protector of the same. No doubt this is a remnant of a former and still not yet quite extinct animistic belief which in the Occident has its counterpart in the local cult of saints, both in Christendom and Islam. Outside the building proper, between this and the enclosure, are seen many skulls of crocodiles deposited at the feet of the tall tamarind trees. Offerings of skulls of these saurians are supposed to especially gladden the heart of the town spirit. The Lak Muang is often consulted as a kind of oracle by prospective winners especially in former days when the big daily lottery yet thrived and to-day it still plays a rôle for parents who desire to have cast the horoscope of their marriageable sons or daughters.

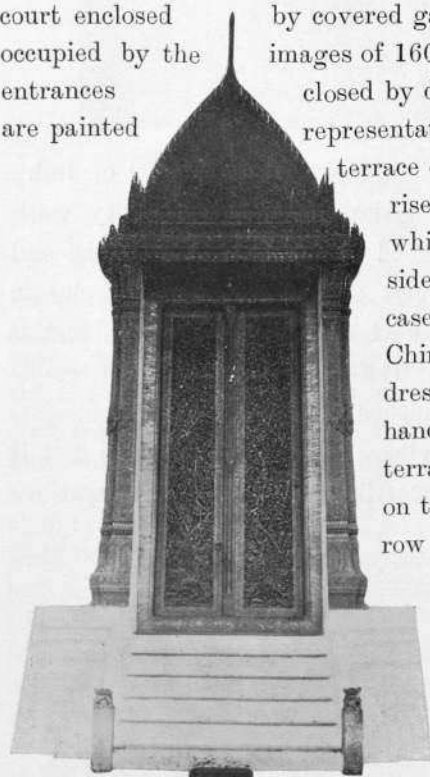


Wat Sudat, signifying the temple of the heaven of Indra (Indra being the king of the gods), lies inside the city walls on the square of the swing called Si Kak Sao Ching Cha and is one of the finest and biggest of the numerous temples in Bangkok, besides being well kept and in good repair, and is therefore well worth a visit. The construction of this temple was begun by Rama I and finished by Rama III, and it consists of two big buildings, the vihara and the Bôt. The first is constructed on a high terrace standing in the centre of a spacious



Wat Sudat, the Vihara on the right and the Bôt in the background.

court enclosed
occupied by the
entrances
are painted

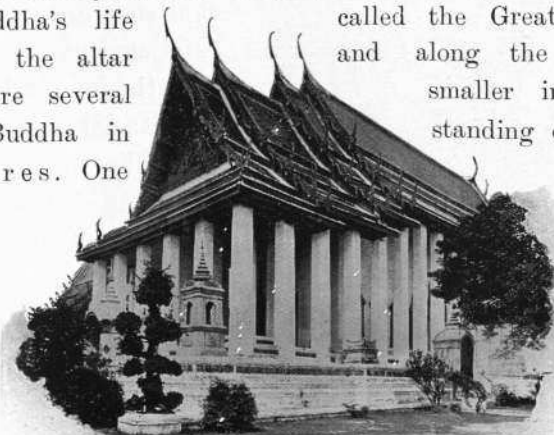


Entrance to the Vihara,
Hand carved door.

with its lofty white walls is covered by a tall two-storeyed roof, the edges of which are encased in the carved and gilt frames called *chô fa*; the eaves of these roofs being supported by rows of tall square columns which terminate in capitals shaped like lotus flowers. The walls of the vihara are pierced by rows of windows which are provided with finely carved and gilt wooden shutters; there are six doors leading into the vihara, three at the northern

by covered galleries; these galleries are images of 160 gilt Buddhas; there are four closed by double doors on whose panels representations of the God Indra. The terrace on which the vihara is built rises in two tiers, access to which is by staircases on all four sides. At the foot of these staircases stand formidable looking Chinese stone warriors in ancient dresses, holding halberds in their hands. At the corners of the terraces stand bronze horses and on the lower terrace is placed a row of tall Chinese pagoda towers which, like the statues, are made of soft grey stone. In the corners of the upper terrace are four small salas with beautifully carved roofs in some of which are placed images of the Buddha. The vihara itself

and three at the southern end. These are preceded by roomy porches supported by colonnades. The gables of the vihara are decorated with carvings representing the God Indra mounted on his three-headed elephant, while on the frontons of the porches are representations of the Garuda. The door panels are carved and heavily gilt, representing the wonder forest of Himavan with its world of animals as described in the Ramayana. The lofty and roomy interior of the vihara is divided by two rows of square pillars into three naves, the middle one being the broadest; at the southern end stands a tall and richly decorated altar on which sits a huge brass image of the Buddha, which measures nearly nine metres in height, brought down from Sukhodai during the second reign. On the base of the altar are seen stone sculptures which hail from Nakon Patom; the style of art represented belongs to the so-called Gupta and the relief may be about 1300 years old. They picture an important incident in Buddha's life called the Great Miracle. Behind the altar and along the southern wall are several smaller images of the Buddha in standing or sitting postures. One of these



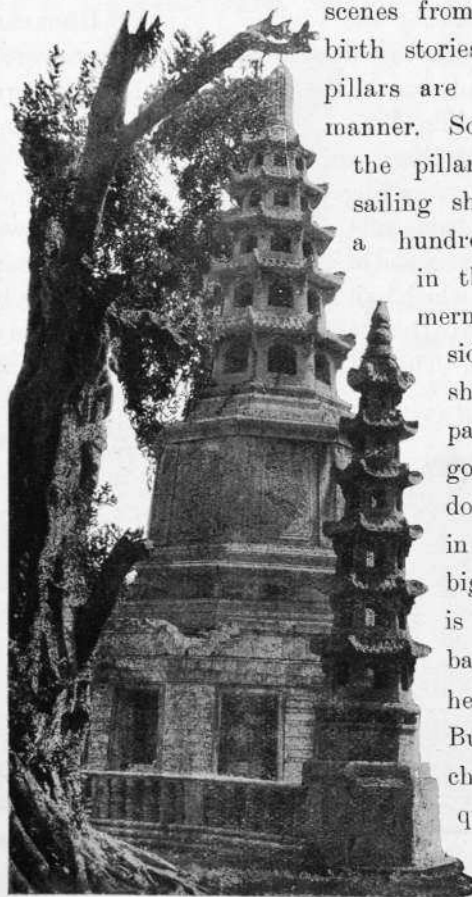
The Bôt, Wat Sudat.

represents Buddha sitting inside the coils of the Naga (not on the coils as is generally the rule with this kind of statue). Some of the images represent sevoks or disciples of the Buddha. The walls of the vihara are decorated from bottom to top with

scenes from the Jatakas, i.e. the birth stories of the Buddha; the pillars are also decorated in this manner. Some of the paintings on

the pillars represent European sailing ships of the type used a hundred years ago, while in the waves mermen and mermaids gambol. The inner

side of the window-shutters are covered with paintings of Brahmanic gods, the inner side of the door panels being decorated in a like manner. The big image of the Buddha is much venerated, and barren mothers often come here to supplicate the Lord Buddha to give them a child. (This is of course quite a heretical belief as Buddha being in Nirvâna can neither



Chinese pagoda towers,
Wat Sudat.

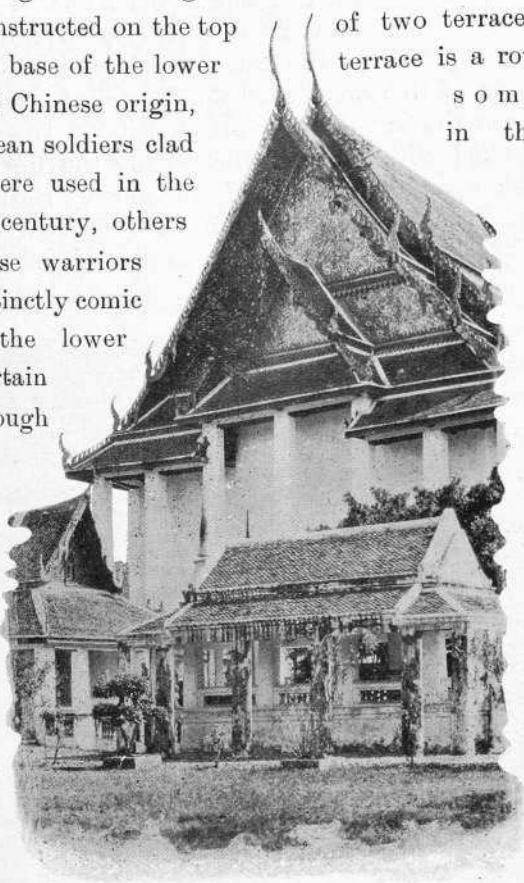
hear nor grant any prayers). Sometimes you may see a big scarlet or violet scarf adorning the image and be sure then that some happy mother has had her prayers granted and is thus showing her gratitude to the Lord Buddha. To the south of the vihara lies the Bôt, a rectangular building some 80 metres long from east to west and constructed on the top of two terraces. Standing along the base of the lower

of quaint statues of Chinese origin, representing European soldiers clad uniforms which were used in the beginning of last century, others

representing Chinese warriors and all having a distinctly comic appearance. On the lower terrace are, with certain intervals, doors through which one passes

to mount the upper terrace. On the panels of these are seen paintings of Garuda fighting with serpents. The Bôt is entirely surrounded by a colonnade which bears the eaves of

of two terraces.
terrace is a row
some
in the



The Bôt from the Terrace,
Wat Sudat.

the four tiered roofs. The interior of this building is specially interesting. In the background rises an enormous gilt image of Buddha in a sitting posture, and in front of this image placed on a long low platform is another but smaller sitting image of the Great Teacher who here presides over an assembly of 80 of his most prominent disciples, the name of each disciple being inscribed on the back of the respective image. The disciples are represented life size and painted in natural colours and the sight of this silent council never fails to make a deep impression upon the imagination of the visitor. The walls are completely decked with frescoes illustrating the life of Buddha and as these paintings are still fresh and well conserved they offer a wealth of interesting details to the devoted student of Buddhism. The panels of the four doors on the east and west as well as the 52 window-shutters, with which the windows in the northern and



In Wat Sudat.

southern walls are provided, are decorated with paintings representing most of the gods of the Brahmanical pantheon such as Rama, Vishnu or Narayana, Siva also called Isvara, Skanda and the elephant-headed Ganesha, the goddess Parvati or Uma, Lakshmi and others. These paintings represent the gods under their different forms (Avatars), most of them possessing more than two arms with three or four faces. Many of these gods are seen fighting against the asuras or demons. Indeed these paintings constitute a unique gallery of Hindu deities, which cannot be found in any other temple in Siam and are therefore especially worth seeing. The Bôt and vihara are surrounded by a low brick wall on the top of which are built several salas; in some of them are seen groups of Chinese figures. The salas placed on the wall facing the square of the swing are used by the onlookers during the swing festival. Behind the temple proper stretches the big quarters for the priests, with low brick houses in which there is room for several hundreds of monks.



The Vihara, Wat Sudat.



BOT PHRAM.

In front of Wat Sudat is the formerly mentioned square called Si Kak Sao Ching Cha, in the centre of which stand on a low platform, two tall red painted wooden pillars joined together at their tops by a carved crossbar; this constitutes the swing. It* is here that the annual Swinging Festival takes place.

Bôt Phram is a Brahmanical temple lying opposite to Wat Sudat. It consists of three low and very unpretentious looking buildings, in which are statues of the gods Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesha and his brother Skanda. Note here, too, the statue of the dancing Shiva. Some of these statues which are very old have come from Cambodia, others hailing from Ayudhya and Lopburi. As already mentioned the Siamese have inherited many Brahmanical customs and beliefs from the Cambodians, and all important State ceremonies as well as many of the civil ones are purely Brahmanical in their origin, though now mixed up with Buddhistic ideas and ceremonies. There is still a corps of Brahmanical astrologers and priests attached to the Court, who play an important rôle at all grand state functions. Besides the Brahmans in Bangkok there is another Brahmanic colony living in the southern capital Nakon Sridharmaraj in Siamese Malaya. The Brahmans are often met with in the vicinity of the palace and are easily recognised by the white dress, with their hair worn in a chignon on the back of their heads.

*See page 105 (Siamese Festivals and Ceremonies).



In the quarter lying between the river and the Rajadamnoen Avenue is situated Wat Janasongkram, the "Temple of Victory in War." It was built by the first Wang Na King after his return from one of his victorious campaigns against the Burmese. The Bôt is a huge square building, its interior being divided by two colonnades into a central nave and two side aisles. The bai sema in this temple are encased in the walls as in the bôt of Wat Mahathad which latter it closely resembles though in the first the big sitting image of the Buddha is surrounded by sixteen of his chief disciples, while the number of the disciples in Wat Mahathad is only eight. The window shutters are gilt on the exterior side, the interior side being decorated with paintings of angels. The most striking feature of this temple is its large gables which are ornamented with a host of gilt figures of flying angels set on a carved and glass incrustated back-ground.

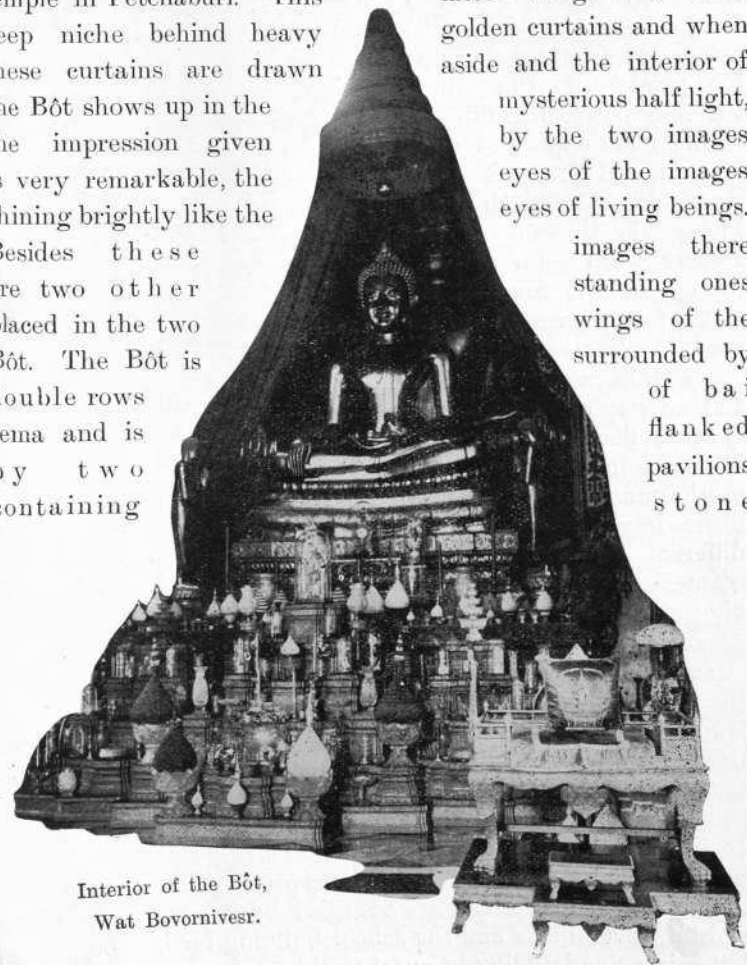


Gable of the Bôt, Wat Janasongkram,



Wat Bovornivesr which means "the Excellent Residence," lies in the Phra Sumein Road facing the city wall and that part of the city moat which here, in its north-western portion, is called Klong Bang Lampu. This temple is not very old, having in fact been constructed as late as the 3rd reign (1824-1851). It is, however, famous for its long association with King Mongkut, who resided here as a Lord Abbot for more than 14 years previous to his accession to the throne. This temple has since the time of King Mongkut been the Royal Temple par excellence, and used to be the residence of the deceased Supreme Patriarch of the Kingdom, the learned and venerated Prince Vajirayan. From this temple also were issued all the reforms which have done so much to purify and edify the Buddhistic Religion and Discipline throughout the country. The temple consists of a Bôt, a tall chedi and several viharas and lesser buildings. The Bôt is built in the form of a 'T' with its head facing north, its gables being ornamented with a Royal Crown by reason of its association with the King Abbot. In its richly decorated interior is found a remarkable image of the Buddha called Phra Buddha Jinasri (the glorious Jina, Jina being the victorious Buddha). This fine statue was cast either in Sawankaloke or Sukhôtai in the middle of the 13th century, soon after the victorious Thai had cast off the Cambodian yoke. The image was kept in Wat Mahathad

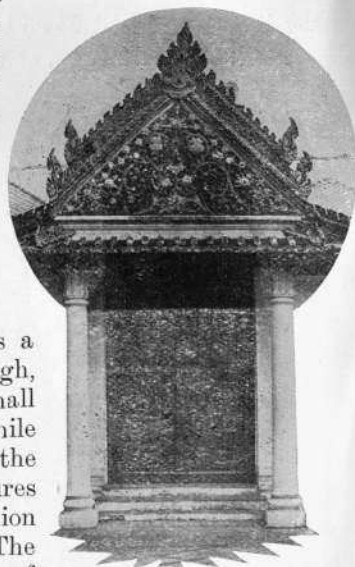
in Pitsanuloke for many centuries until in the 3rd reign of this dynasty it was brought down to Bangkok and installed in this temple. Behind the image of Phra Buddha Jinasri sits another, but far bigger one, which was brought hither from an old temple in Petchaburi. This latter image sits in a deep niche behind heavy golden curtains and when these curtains are drawn aside and the interior of the Bôt shows up in the mysterious half light, the impression given by the two images is very remarkable, the eyes of the images shining brightly like the eyes of living beings. Besides these images there are two other standing ones placed in the two wings of the Bôt. The Bôt is surrounded by double rows of bai sema and is flanked by two pavilions containing



Interior of the Bôt,
Wat Bovornivesr.

statues of Buddha, including one standing image hailing from the environment of Lopburi. This fine image belongs to the so-called School of Dvaravati. In the low pavilion situated to the west of the Bôt close up to the temple enclosure are seen two foot-prints of the Buddha; these hail from Sukhothai, a town on the upper course of the Menam, and they are certainly very old. Behind the Bôt rises a Phra Chedi, 50 metres high, resting upon a terrace with small prangs at the four corners while on the four corners of the base of the chedi itself are bronze figures representing a horse, an eagle, a lion and an elephant respectively. The chedi is flanked by two groups of sala and in the walls of the two northernmost are seen rows of small

niches in which are placed statuettes of hermits performing the different movements of health exercise. They are called in Siamese "rusi dat ton." Behind the chedi are two vihara, the biggest containing two famous statues of Phra Buddha Saiyat (the sleeping Buddha), one hailing from Pitsanuloke, the other from Sukhothai. Finally in the south-western corner of the temple court grows a huge bodhi tree, the lower part of the trunk being enclosed by a brick gallery in which sit, stand or lie several images of the Buddha. At the entrance to the temple stands a picturesque gate building whose carved doors show bearded demons trampling upon crocodiles and dragons. In front of the temple, standing in the street itself, is a fountain surmounted by a golden hooded serpent. The vast grounds outside the temple proper are occupied by the buildings of the cloister, several sala and the school building for big boys. The latter is a fine building in quasi-Gothic style.



A Gate,
Wat Bovornivesr.



Wat Rajabopitr lies between Klong Ku Muang Doem and Fuang Nakhon Street opposite the Saranrom Garden. It consists mainly of a tall Phra Chedi enclosed by a circular gallery, the faces of this gallery being broken



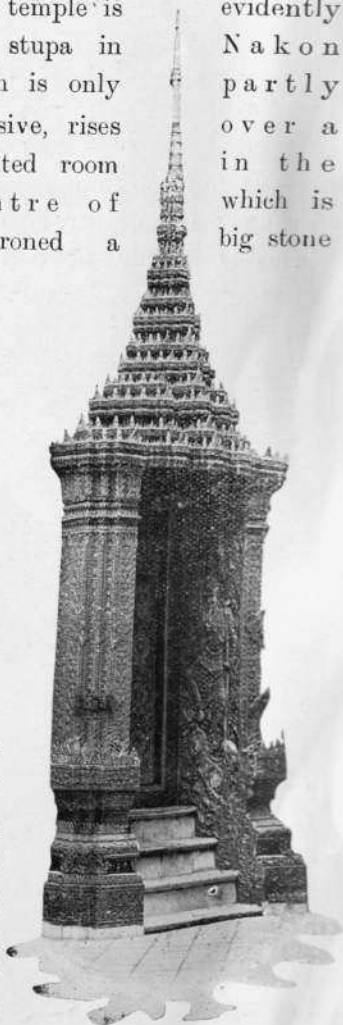
The Bôt, Wat Rajabopitr.

by four vihara; of the latter, however, only two serve as entrances to the inner narrow courtyard which runs round the base of the chedi. This temple is evidently a copy of the grand stupa in Patom. The chedi, which is only partly massive, rises over a vaulted room in the centre of which is enthroned a big stone



A gate with carved panels.

image of the Buddha sitting on the Naga — a Phra Nak Brok, as it is called in Siamese, brought down from Lopburi. In niches in the exterior side of the chedi are placed standing images of the great Teacher, some representing him as a monk, others in the dress of a Royal Prince, while



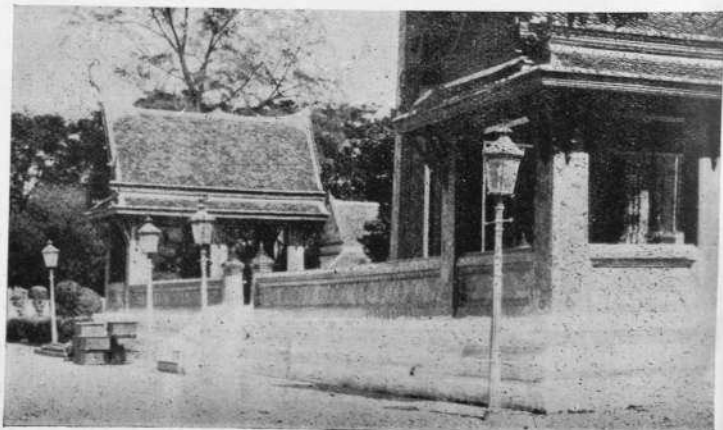
An entrance with elaborate carving.



Interior of the Bôt, Wat Rajabopitr.

a statue of Buddha in walking posture is of special interest. In the northern vihara with its heavily gilt stucco ceiling are seen paintings from the life of Buddha. To the south of the chedi lies the building comprising the cloister, and here among other buildings is the residence of the present Prince Patriarch of the Kingdom. The temple is enclosed by tall brick walls pierced by a number of gates with wooden doors.

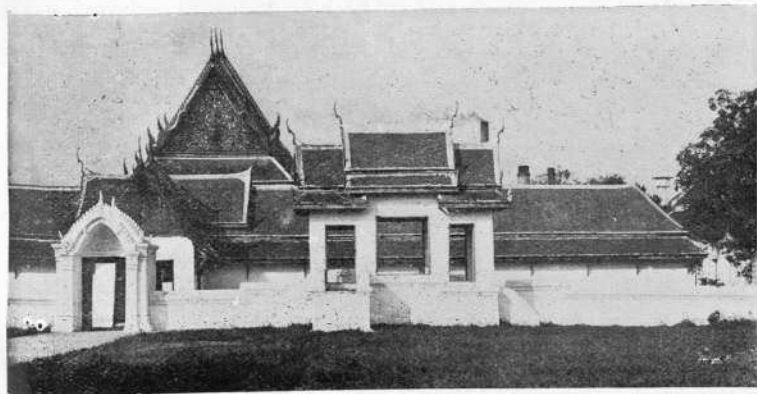
On the panels of these are seen life-sized carved representations of Siamese soldiers clad in the uniforms of the fifth reign. In front of the temple facing Klong Talad is a luxuriant tropical garden full of palms and rare trees. This garden contains a collection of different monuments, such for instance as Cambodian prangs, several Indian pavilions, gilded phra chedi, the latter sometimes in groups of three, also two small pavilions in Gothic style, and, most interesting of all, a copy of three Angkor Wat with their connecting galleries, a small piece of Angkor Wat with walls and frontons decorated with sculptures of heavenly dancing girls. Wat Rajabopitr dates from the 5th reign and is one of H. M. the King's favourite temples, His Majesty personally distributing the Kathin gifts to the monks every year.



Before entering the Bôt,
Wat Rajabopitr.

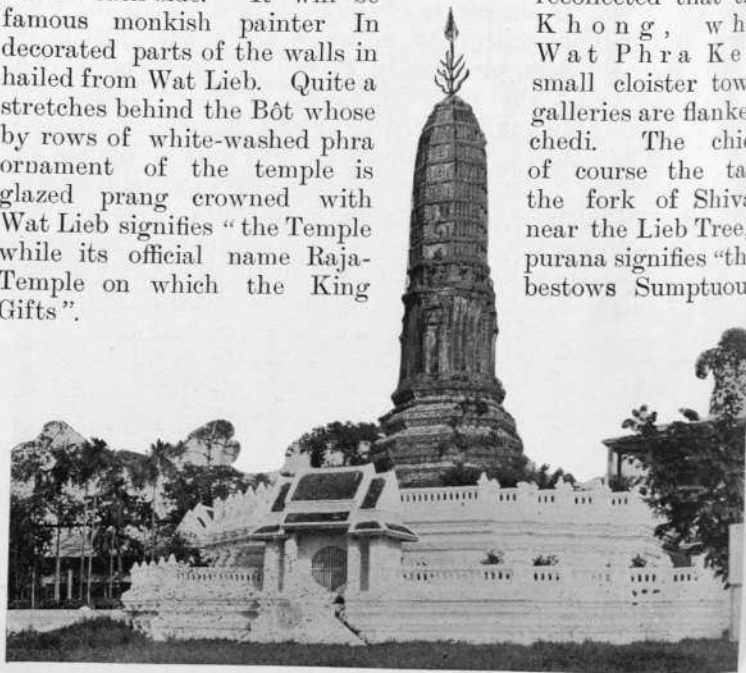


In the quarter lying to the south of Wat Sudat and close to the premises of the Siam Electric Corp., Ltd., lies Wat Lieb officially called Rajapurana, with its tall prang. The principal building, the Bôt, lies in a square courtyard enclosed by covered galleries which are closed to the exterior and open towards the temple court. In the corridors of these galleries are placed 127 sitting gilt images of the Buddha, besides 11 standing ones and some lesser images. Altogether 141 images find shelter in these galleries. In the centre of the courtyard stands the Bôt, a very fine building with lofty whitewashed walls, gilt doors and window-shutters, elaborately carved and gilt cho-fa and with the eaves of the glittering tiered roofs supported by rows of square columns terminating in gilt lotus-flower-shaped capitals. The gables are ornamented with carved figures of Vishnu mounted on the Garuda. The walls of the interior are decorated with paintings representing the Buddhist heavens, and the space between the windows is covered with scenes from Buddha's former existences, the legend of Vessantara being the chief subject treated there. Above the windows are small



The Bôt lies in a square courtyard enclosed by covered galleries.

gilt framed pictures of the Life of Gautama Buddha (similar gilt framed pictures are seen in several other bôts such as those in Wat Po and Wat Rajabopitr, to name a few examples). Finally on the panels of the two southern doors are seen some remarkable pictures representing the wonderful tree growing on the slopes of Mount Meru, the dwelling of the Gods or the Indian Olympus. According to the Indian cosmography called "Tribhumi", the fruits of this tree develop into young beautiful maidens who are courted by the spirits of the air, the God Indra's followers, who come flying and kiss the maidens with the fatal result that the maidens after being kissed die in seven days. In the background of the Bôt sits a big gilt bronze image of the Buddha with Sariputra and Mogallana, the two chief disciples, kneeling, one on each side. It will be recollected that the famous monkish painter In Khong, who decorated parts of the walls in Wat Phra Keo, small cloister town hailed from Wat Lieb. Quite a stretches behind the Bôt whose galleries are flanked by rows of white-washed phra chedi. The chief ornament of the temple is of course the tall glazed prang crowned with the fork of Shiva. Wat Lieb signifies "the Temple while its official name Raja-Temple on which the King Gifts".



The tall prang of Wat Lieb.



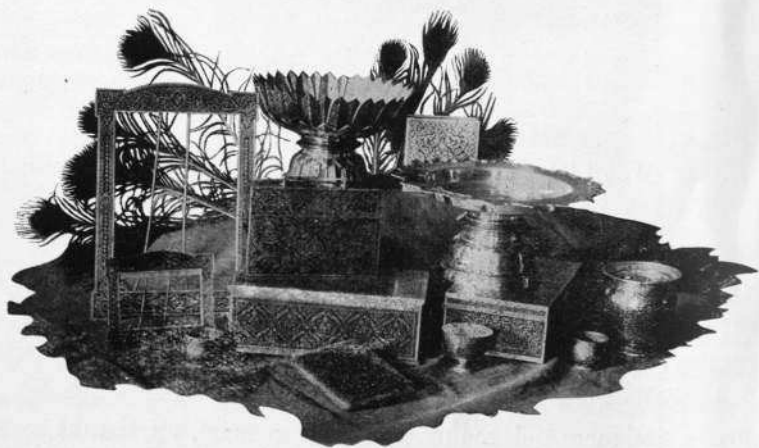
The Arts and Crafts School.

Near Wat Lieb lies a large boys' school by the name of *Suan Kularb*, i. e. the rose garden, and here is also situated an establishment or rather an institution called the *Arts and Crafts School*, where young Siamese are trained in the different branches of art and industry, such as gold and silver work, carpentry, leather work and that delicate and painstaking art called Niello work. A generation of young Siamese artists, painters, designers and sculptors is now growing up, thanks to



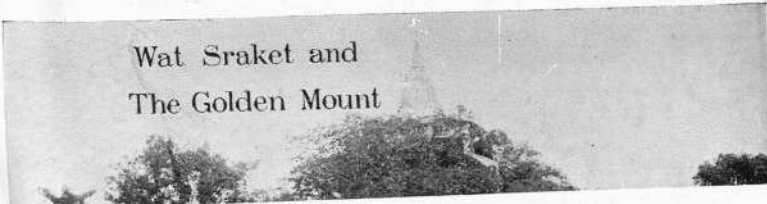
Students at work.

the excellent training they have received in this model school. It is hoped that little by little a class of national artisans will pass out from this school and take over some of the positions now all filled by the immigrant Chinese. Tourists may visit this highly interesting institution at all times and can purchase some of the many kinds of beautifully manufactured articles made there.



A few kinds of beautifully manufactured articles made in the Arts & Crafts School.

Wat Sraket and The Golden Mount



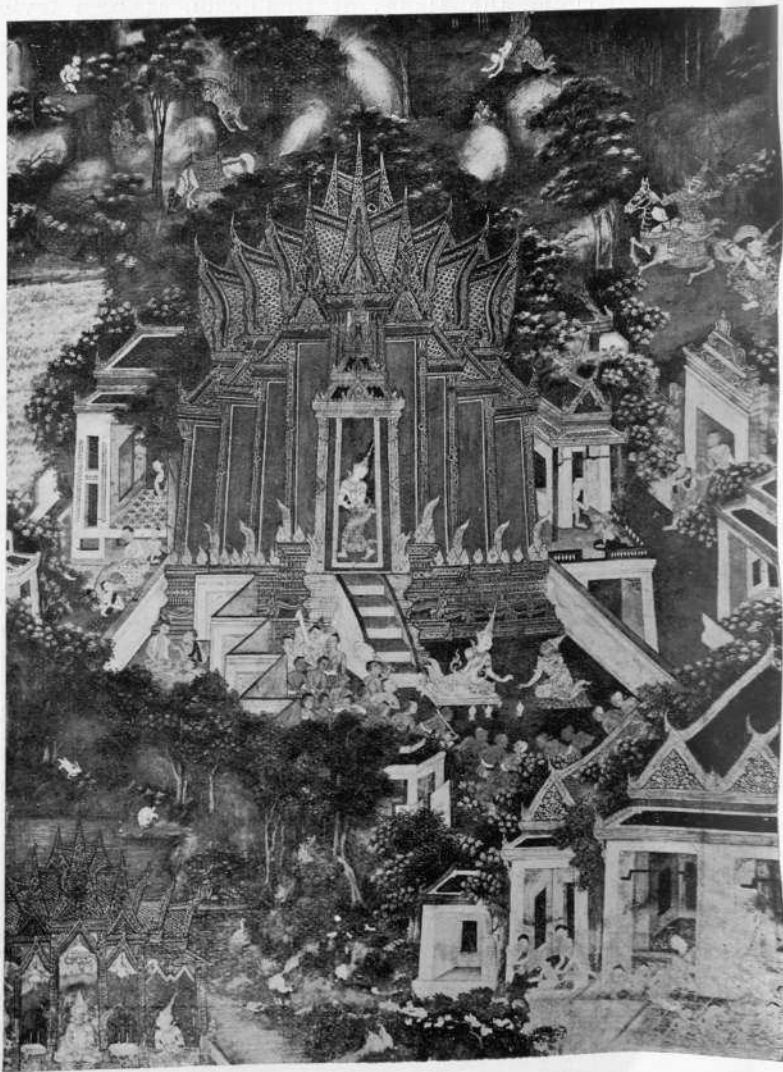
Wat Sraket with its tall brick mount called Pu Khao Tong, i.e. "the Golden Mount," is one of the most important temples of the capital. It lies outside the walled city, east of the Grand Palace near the city moat, at a point where a big waterway called Klong Mahanak branches off. At this place there was already, before Bangkok was made the capital, an old temple which was rebuilt and much extended during the reigns of the first kings of the present dynasty. The temple consists of two buildings, a Bôt and a vihara, besides extensive priests' quarters. The Bôt which stands in the centre of a stone-paved courtyard enclosed by galleries is built in the ordinary Siamese temple style, being surrounded by a colonnade which supports the projecting eaves of its three-storeyed roof; the gables are beautifully inlaid and ornamented with figures of the god Vishnu mounted on the Garuda. The interior of the Bôt is, as usual, occupied by a big sitting gilt image of Buddha facing east. The long sidewalls are covered with frescoes consisting of three rows of kneeling and praying angels, while between the figures of these angels are seen talapats, the fans used by the monks for hiding their faces when they sing the sacred litanies. Of great interest are the frescoes painted on the western wall, i.e. the one behind the image of the Buddha. Here one sees Buddha and the blessed gathered in Nirvâna, while below



Wat SraKet.

The interior of the Bôt is occupied by a big sitting gilt image of Buddha facing east.

is hell; Yomaraja, the Hades of Buddhism, is seen trying and judging the evil-doers who are being punished with all kinds of gruesome tortures, some being burnt, boiled, hanged, while others are being pierced through and through or hacked into small pieces. On the window shutters are painted standing devatas, while some of the door-panels are decorated with pictures of soldiers clad in the old fashioned uniforms from the time of Louis XIV, and others with pictures of Indians clothed in costumes from the time of the Great Mogul. Outside the Bôt are the eight bai-sema placed in small picturesque pavilions grouped round the Bôt. The square gallery enclosing the Bôt is interrupted by four entrances, and against its walls in the long corridors are placed 163 sitting and four standing gilt images of Buddha. A peculiarly restful and dreamy atmosphere dominates this temple and, when standing in the courtyard looking westwards over the roof of the galleries, one sees the glittering roofs and ridges of the vihara and farther away the Golden Mount which raises its tree clad and phra chedi crowned mass towards the blue sky, a sight not without charm. Leaving the Bôt we next enter the courtyard in which stands, among tall leafy teak trees, the vihara, of a similar style to that of the Bôt though slightly taller but not so long. Inside the vihara and facing north is a gigantic standing gilt image of Buddha called Phra Buddha Attaros; this bronze colossus was brought down from the old capital of Pitsanuloke and it measures nine metres in height. Over the two doors which on either side of the image of Buddha lead from the front room into a back room are painted frescoes representing Sariputra and Moggalana. The solid teakwood doors of this building are



Wall paintings inside the Bôt.

exquisitely carved and richly gilt. In two of the corners of the courtyard are smaller buildings sheltering rows of images of Buddha. To the south of the temple lie the extensive quarters for the monks, giving room for some 300 wearers of the yellow toga. Wat Sra ket is the place for cremations par excellence, and during the dry season the two meru or pavilions for cremating the dead placed here are nearly always in use.

Let us then direct our steps towards the Golden Mount which is one of the most conspicuous and picturesque landmarks of Bangkok. Where the present brick mountain stands there stood formerly a huge phra chedi, the building of which was commenced by King Phra Nang Klao or Rama III. He, however, had to give up the construction for the reason that the ground was too soft to stand the weight of the enormous brick mass. Later on King Maha Mongkut took up his predecessor's work and succeeded in constructing the present huge edifice which now rises over the crumbling mass of the old chedi. The slopes of the mount are adorned with a number of small caves, chedi, images and sala, and are planted with trees, which give it the look of a real mountain. Two winding staircases with low easy steps lead to the summit which is crowned with a phra chedi enclosed by a covered gallery. Access to the phra chedi can only be had during the annual Pu Khao Tong fair in the month of November, when thousands of the faithful come to adore the relic enshrined in the base of the chedi. This relic is a genuine piece of bone of Buddha and was, together with other pieces, discovered in 1898



Statue of Buddha in the Vihara.

in a huge earth-covered ruin of a stupa at Piprahwā near the Nepalese border in India. After the discovery the Indian Government divided the precious relics between the foremost Buddhist countries, viz: Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Japan. Siam sent a special envoy to receive its part of the relic and on its arrival in Bangkok it was borne in solemn procession to the top of the Golden Mount and deposited in the chedi there. From the platform on both sides of the chedi one can always enjoy a unique view over the capital. Looking down one sees at the foot of the mount the temple buildings of Wat Sraket with their shimmering roofs and gilt carvings and the extensive monks' quarters, all set in a frame of big shady trees. Near to the mount runs the city moat called Klong Sapan Han, from which Klong Mahanak branches off, running in an easterly direction, and at high water this klong offers a most interesting and lively picture with its teeming life in all kinds of coming and going boats. Along the city moat we see the city wall with its embrasures, and just where the broad Rajadamnoen Boulevard crosses the moat there still remains one of the old picturesque forts. Looking westwards one can see the tall roofs of Wat Sudat and the top of the red-painted swing, while farther away over a labyrinth of house-tops and big administrative buildings are seen the grand palace with the glittering spires of the Chakri Palace, the Dusit Maha Prasād and the shimmering fabric of the golden chedi inside Wat Phra Keo. To the south of the palace flash the gilt gables of Wat Po and further away again, on the other side of the river, the slender prang of Wat Arun soars upward and in this direction, too, a glimpse of the broad bosom of "the Mother of the Waters"



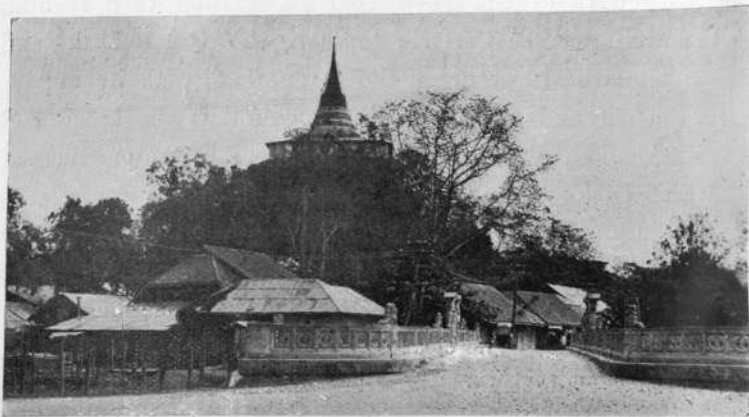
Bird's eye view of Bangkok from the Golden Mount looking towards Rajadamnoen Avenue.



Bird's eye view of Bangkok from the Golden Mount looking westwards.

may be had. Looking to the south the horizon is closed as by a mighty forest, the vast and idyllic garden-land on the west bank of the river, from which, here and there, some white prang or pointed chedi peeps up out of all the greenery. On this side of the river, towards the south and south-east, the newer part of the capital extends with its throng of streets and houses, presenting a view which, however, is not that of a desert of stones like so many American or European cities, because here in Bangkok the trees and the verdure dominate. Seen from a high position, the town resembles one huge park though here and there tall chimneys belonging to rice mills or factories belch forth their smoke, indicating that this is really a living and prospering town. Continuing, our eyes travel towards the east where among other buildings we can just discern the tall arched roof of Bangkok's Railway Terminus and furthestmost east a glimpse is seen of the red towers of the Phya Thai Palace and then turning to the north we see the tree tops of the Dusit Park and the white marble structure of the Throne Hall with its cupola. From the Throne Hall our eyes can now follow the broad and stately avenue of Rajadamnoen up to its end at the precincts of the Grand Palace; between this avenue and the river stretches the northern suburb called Samsen with its extensive gardens and palm groves. We have now made the round trip. To get a good idea of how Bangkok spreads, however, one must see it from an aeroplane. The clearest view over the city is obtained during the early morning hours, but to see the sun setting over this town of palaces and flashing temple spires is also well worth a climb to the top of the Golden Mount. Before we leave Pu Khao Tong, a short explanation of the origin of such

structures may interest the enquiring visitor. According to the Brahmanic religion the gods live on the top of the mountain called Meru, the god Shiva living apart on the top of Kailasa. The Cambodian kings, themselves of Hindu origin and fervent Shivaists, therefore excelled in building temples to the honour of the gods on the tops of the hills, especially Shiva temples, which always contained the linga, the symbol of this god. The Thai kings of Ayudhya followed in the steps of their Cambodian teachers and had also a golden mount built there (see Guide to Ayudhya) but this mount was crowned, not with the linga, but with the chaste symbol of the chedi; so when Phra Nang Klao started to build a golden mount in Bangkok he merely followed the examples given by his Royal predecessors



Pu Khao Tong seen from the street.

Wat Rajanadda

Wat Rajanadda. Before passing through the gap of the city wall and over the bridge one notices lying on the right hand the walled enclosure of Wat Rajanadda (the Temple of the Royal Nephew). Tourists who have time to spare are recommended to visit this interesting temple, which consists of a Bôt flanked by two vihara built in the common Siamese temple style. The pictures on the walls in the interior of the Bôt are well worth seeing. On the two long side walls are symbolical paintings representing the twelve months of the year. On the southern wall the Lord Buddha is seen sitting under the Nigrotha tree in the grove at Buddh Gaya, while on the northern wall one sees Buddha descending from heaven after he had preached there the sublime law to his mother, Queen Maya; three ladders made of precious stones, gold and silver respectively, connect heaven with earth and standing at the top of the central ladder is Buddha perceiving the three worlds—that of the Brahmas (heaven), that of the men on earth, and that of the devils. Below the last mentioned picture is a remarkably well executed oil painting of a former Abbot of this temple. The window shutters are of gilt carved wood

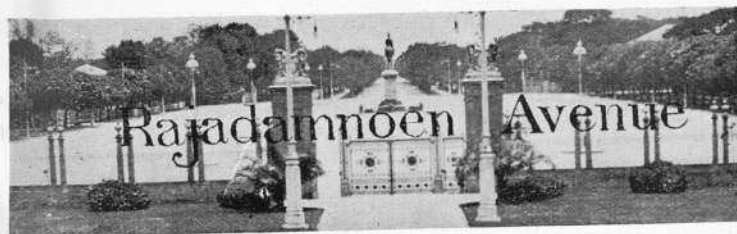


Behind the Bôt rises a peculiar construction.

and in the recesses of the same as well as in those of the doors are painted very realistic and vigorous pictures representing demons or angels. The gilt sitting bronze image of the Buddha which is placed in the background of the Bôt is considered to be one of the best in Bangkok having a more slender and graceful shape than the majority of the images found in other temples. Behind the Bôt rises a peculiar construction consisting of a succession of walls in several storeys and terminating in rows of pavilions crowned with chedi grouped around a central pavilion terminating in a slender spire. The whole fabric is painted in red and was undoubtedly intended to be a copy of the famous Mogul Palace in Fahtipursikri Modd, lying in Northern India between Allahabad and Cawnpur. From the top of this construction one has a good view over a part of the inner city. Between the city walls and the Swing the eyes rove over many glittering temple roofs and the cupolas of big leafy trees.



Wat Rajanadda from outside.



From the Phra Meru Ground the broad and stately Avenue called Rajadamnoen, or the Royal promenade, flanked with rows of stately tamarind trees, leads out to the Throne Hall and the Dusit quarter where it ends. A certain foreign prince who has visited Siam several times has likened this fine avenue to the Champs-Elysées of Paris and it certainly vies in beauty with that famous thoroughfare—only, it lacks the fine buildings which flank the latter, but these will undoubtedly appear in time. During its course to the Throne Hall the Rajadamnoen crosses three canals which are spanned by very fine bridges. The first one spans the Klong Ku Muang Doem, the second the city moat, also called Klong Sapan Han or Klong Bang Lampu. This second bridge is the finest of the three, its four columns being adorned with galley prows, which take one's memory back to ancient Rome, to the column adorned with galley prows that was raised there in memory of the victory of Consul Duilius over the Carthaginians, the first naval victory won by the Romans. This bridge is called the Pan Fa Lilas Bridge and the Rajadamnoen Avenue here passes through a broad gap in the old city wall. To the right side of the bridge is seen one of the old picturesque forts, that still, with certain intervals, crown the city wall.

Continuing our route we pass over the bridge, from which we see the picturesque tree-clad brick mountain of Pu Khao Tong looming up on our right hand, while to our left the small, but dainty and lovely gilt structure of Wat Parinayok peeps out among the trees. On either side of this section of the Avenue are several military barracks as well as a military college. We next cross Klong Padung Krung Kasem over the third and last bridge and proceed along the last stretch of this fine boulevard.

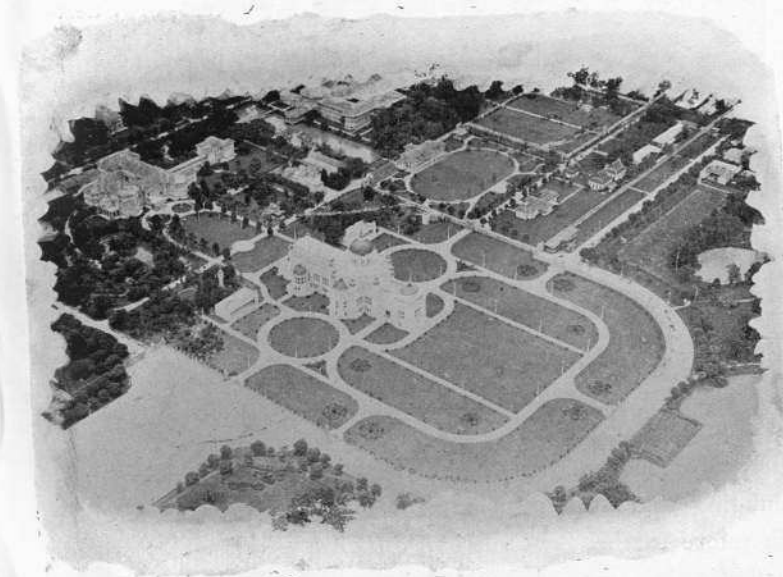
a group of barracks Theatre which lies on our Club, recognizable by its the Paruskawan Palace, left, and then arrive the square in the centre fine equestrian statue Chulalongkorn.



A Statue of King Chulalongkorn.



At the northern end of this square towers the white marble structure of the Throne Hall with its vaulted dome. When His Majesty the King is in residence the yellow Royal Standard with the red Garuda is seen fluttering from the top of this dome. The official name of the Throne Hall is Phra Tinang Ananta Samakom. (The Palace of the Immense Assembly).



The Throne Hall from the air
(Taken by the Royal Aeronautical Service.)



Interior of the Throne Hall.

Engineers experienced many difficulties. The subsoil of the ground could not stand the enormous weight of the building and began to sink, therefore further construction had to be suspended until

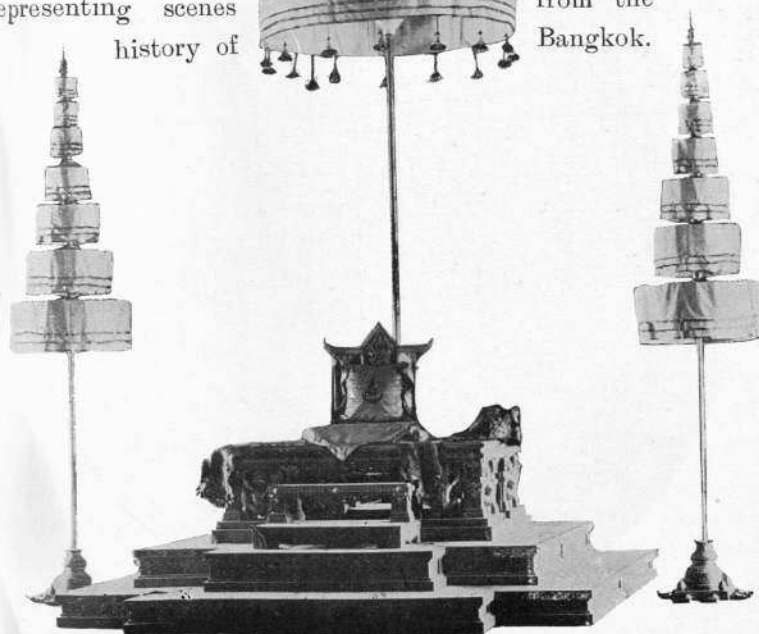


The Throne Hall as seen from Dusit Park.

The Throne Hall is built entirely of white marble brought hither from the famous quarries of Carara in Italy, its style being that of Italian Renaissance, and it is generally considered to be the finest piece of this style east of Suez. It was planned and constructed by Italian architects and cost about eight million Baht. During its construction, the

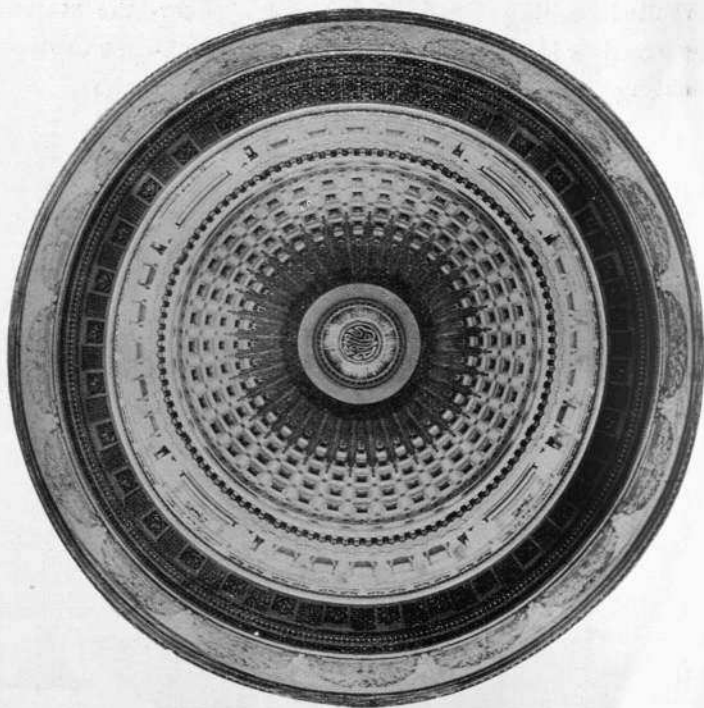
an Italian Civil Engineer stabilised the building by air-filled concrete pontoons. As a matter of fact this huge pile, of masonry and marble, floats soft river mud of which is composed. The building lower one being used on Banquets, the upper one Throne Hall proper. The chief entrance is situated in the left wing where a winding marble staircase leads up to the vaulted ceiling is covered with representing scenes history of

the building by air-filled concrete pontoons. As a matter of fact this huge pile, on these pontoons on the the subsoil of Bangkok rises in two storeys, the occasions of State being occupied by the The chief entrance is where a winding marble the upper storey. over the staircase paintings from the Bangkok.



The Throne.

From the top of this staircase one sees to the right on the ceiling a picture of King Rama II, sitting on his Royal Palanquin surrounded by his courtiers and architects, directing the construction of Wat Arun, whose half finished pile is seen in the background. To the left is seen another painting representing King Rama III directing the construction of a fort at the south-western corner of the Grand Palace enceinte. From the staircase one enters a kind of ante-chamber where, among other things, one notices two gilt Karen drums standing on each side of the doorway; from this ante-chamber

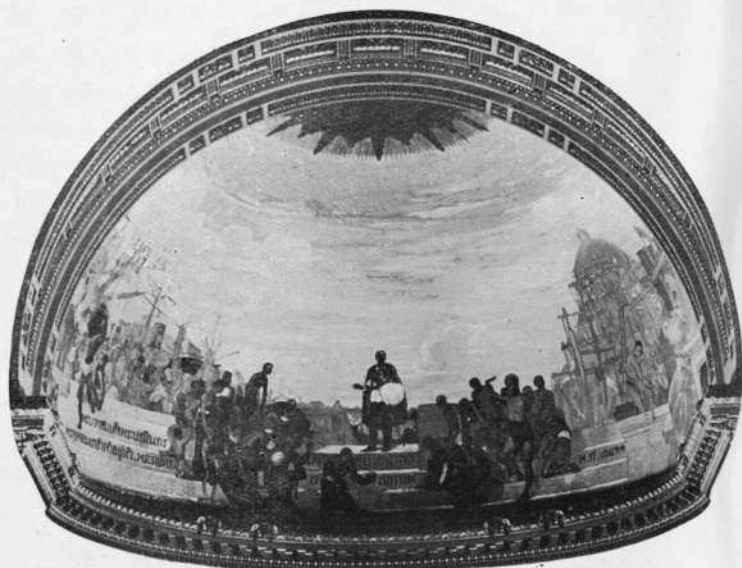


The Dome.



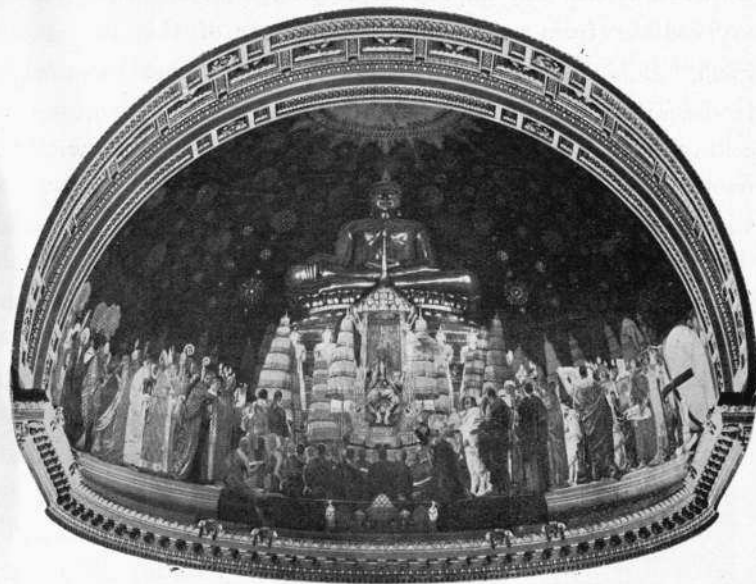
Wall Painting.

one penetrates into the the Throne Room proper. The Throne Room has the shape of a cross, with its two long arms pointing north and south, the centre being directly under the lofty dome. The vaulted ceilings are of a splendid design and execution, being covered with large paintings. On the ceiling to the north is seen a grand painting representing King Rama I, or Phra Buddha Yod Fa Chula Lok, sitting on his war elephant and directing the foundation of Bangkok. On the southern end is seen King Chulalongkorn in the act of liberating the slaves. To the left and the right in the background of this painting are the Throne



H. M. King Chulalongkorn liberating slaves.

Hall under construction and the bustling life of the port of Bangkok with its steamers, symbolising the new era of life and prosperity which was inaugurated by this benevolent and statesmanlike monarch. In the centre of the northern and southern ceilings are painted in gold the names of the two monarchs who are represented on the respective paintings. Turning round towards the door by which we entered the Throne Room we see painted on the wall over this door a picture of the coronation of His Majesty, the late King, represented in his full Royal Robes standing in front of the Dusit Maha Prasâd receiving the homage of the assembled grand dignitaries of the realm. The vaulted ceilings of the Throne Room are supported by rows of splendid marble columns.



The Declaration of the Liberty of Religion in Siam.

In a western portion of the Throne Room stands, on a low platform, under the gold-rimmed nine-tiered umbrella, the symbol of the supreme power of the Kingdom, the Royal Throne which is covered with a tiger's skin. The Throne Room is lighted by tall windows to the north and the south as well as by windows in the dome. The vault of the dome is emblazoned with the gilt initials of His late Majesty encircled by a golden halo of rays. During the early morning hours or in the late afternoon, when the rays of the sun penetrate through the windows in the dome, there falls a wonderful soft golden stream of light down through the Throne Room creating a mysterious atmosphere,

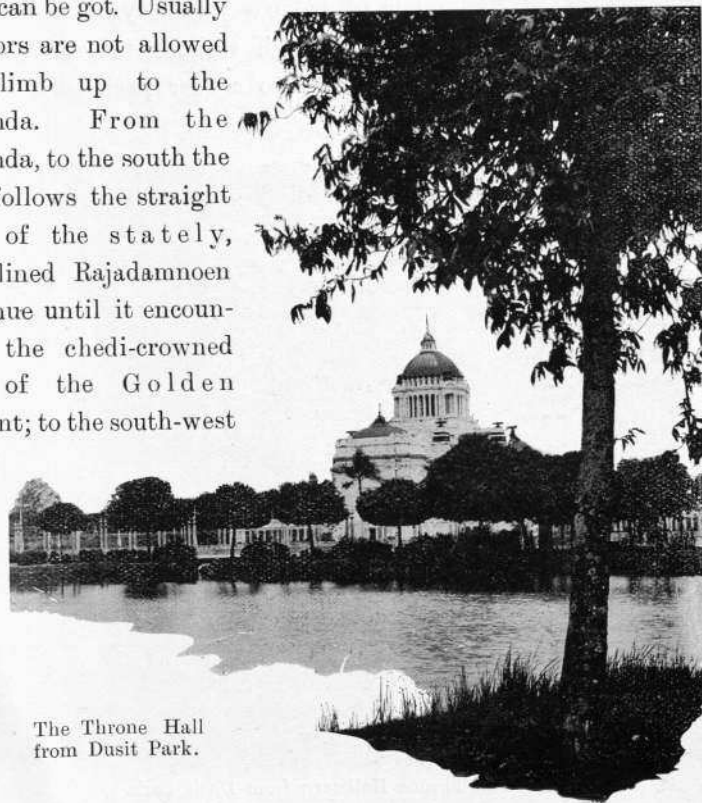
which enhances the impression of a splendour which, so to say, radiates from every nook and corner of this magnificent room. Behind the Throne Room is still another room which is decorated in much the same manner as the others, its ceilings being ornamented with gilt rosettes inscribed with the names of the first six sovereigns of the reigning dynasty. At the end of this last room is another staircase which leads down below, while a narrow winding staircase leads up to the



The Eastern End, the Throne Hall.

rotunda in the dome. On the wall over the staircase is a big picture representing King Mongkut sitting under the huge golden image of the Phra Buddha Jin-araj. To the left and the right of the king is seen an assembly consisting of ecclesiastics of the Christian and Buddhist churches together with Chinese priests and Mohammedan mullahs. This painting symbolises the declaration of religious liberty in Siam. The Throne Hall is used for grand State functions

such as on the occasion of His Majesty's Birthday when the Princes of the Royal House and the high civil and military dignitaries of the kingdom clad in their resplendent full dress uniforms assemble to offer their congratulations to the Sovereign. Here are also held cabinet meetings presided over by His Majesty the King, and Ambassadors of Foreign States are sometimes received in audience. A bird's eye view from the rotunda of the dome over the town is the most extensive one that can be got. Usually visitors are not allowed to climb up to the rotunda. From the eye follows the straight line of the stately, tree-lined Rajadamnoen Avenue until it encounters the chedi-crowned top of the Golden Mount; to the south-west



The Throne Hall from Dusit Park.

are seen the spires of the Grand Palace and Wat Po, and further away again the tall pile of Wat Arun. To the west one looks over the gardens of Samsen to the river, the city proper being almost hidden by the luxuriant verdure; and finally to the south-east one sees the glittering roofs of the beautiful Wat Benchamabopitr flashing out in the sunshine. Down below at the very foot of the Throne Hall we see the lakes and the rich foliage of the Dusit Park, while behind the Throne Hall are seen a number of palaces which, lying in beautiful gardens, are surrounded by a high walled enclosure; one of these gardens has been turned into a deer park (i.e. the one nearest to the Na Phra Lan).



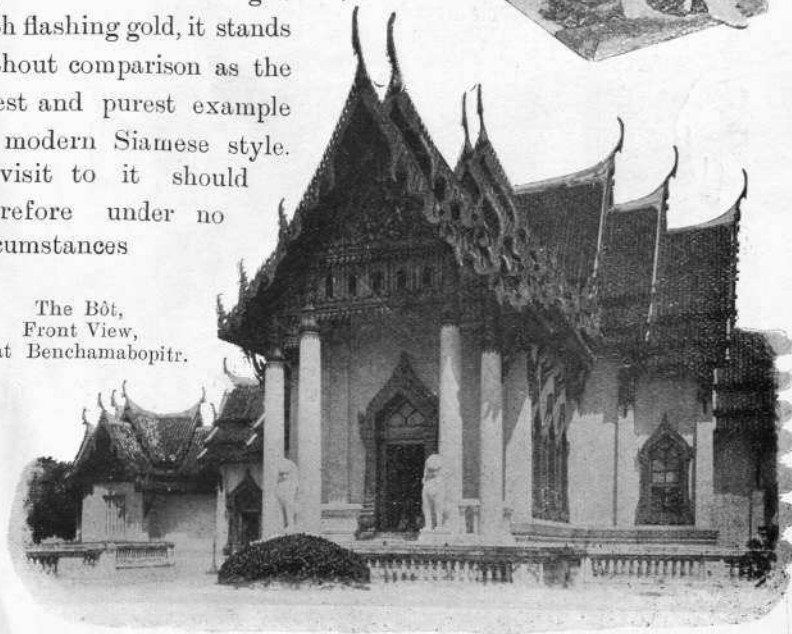
The Throne Hall seen from Dusit Park.

Wat Benchamabopitr

Wat Benchamabopitr lies near Dusit Park at the crossing of the Sri Ayudhya and Nakon Pathom Roads. This beautiful temple is built of the choicest white marble from Carrara in Italy. Its roofs are covered with glittering yellow tiles and surmounted by gilt, tapering "cho-fa". Without exaggeration this temple is worthy of being called the jewel among the temples of Bangkok. A small piece of exquisite art, executed in dazzling white, crowned with flashing gold, it stands without comparison as the finest and purest example of modern Siamese style. A visit to it should therefore under no circumstances

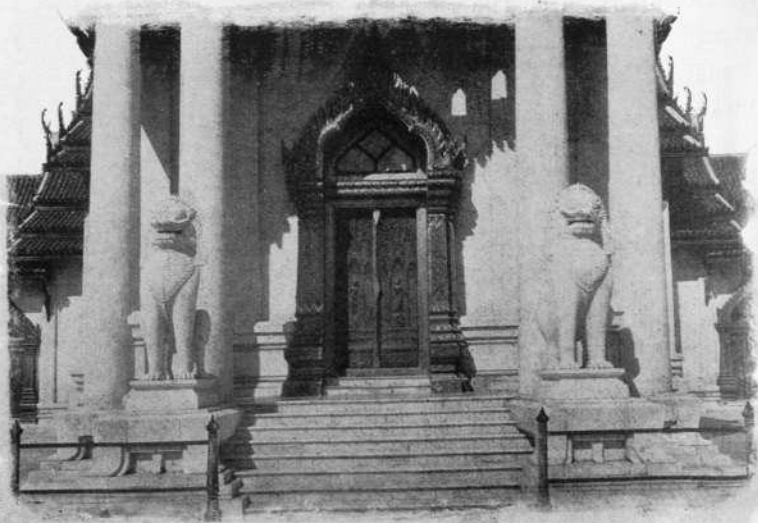


The Bôt,
Front View,
Wat Benchamabopitr.





A pavilion within the temple grounds.



Entrance to the Bôt, Wat Benchamabopitr.

whatever be missed by the tourist should he even have the most limited space of time. The temple buildings stand inside an enclosure of stone pillars with wrought iron railings, the entrance being from the east through a handsome gate whose fronton has the shape of a naga.



Image of Buddha inside the Bôt.

A broad stone-paved walk leads up to the lion-guarded door of the Bôt, which faces east. On either side of this walk stands a pavilion built of bricks in the old Javanese style, having four frontons on which are inscriptions. The northern pavilion, however, has on one of its frontons a stucco relief representing a girl sitting at her loom. This relief alludes to an old popular Siamese folk-tale. The same pavilion

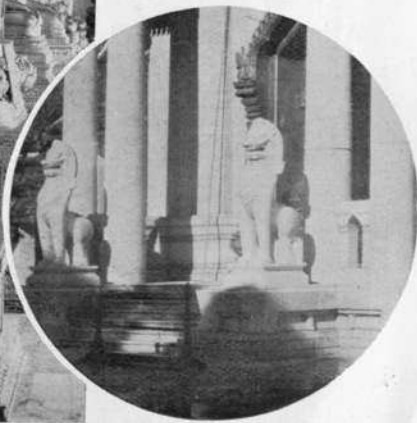


A statue representing Buddha after his 40 days fast.

contains an alabaster statue of the Buddha in Burmese style. The southern pavilion shelters a fine bronze statue of the Buddha sitting on the naga. This latter statue hails from Chaiya in Southern Siam. On its base an inscription in Cambodian records that the image was cast by the order of a Maharaja of Malayu (a king or emperor residing at Jambi in Sumatra). The date is 12th century, at which time Sumatra was the nucleus of a powerful hinduised Malay Empire that dominated most of the countries comprising



Statues of Buddha in the Gallery,
Wat Benchamabopitr.



Entrance to the Bôt.

Indonesia. The plan of the Bôt is that of a blunt cross with its longest axis from east to west. The walls of the Bôt as well as those of the galleries are entirely constructed of white marble. The Bôt is provided with a row of latticed windows set in gilt frames, the lower part being made up of bronze reliefs representing rows of standing monsters which act as a kind of caryatides.

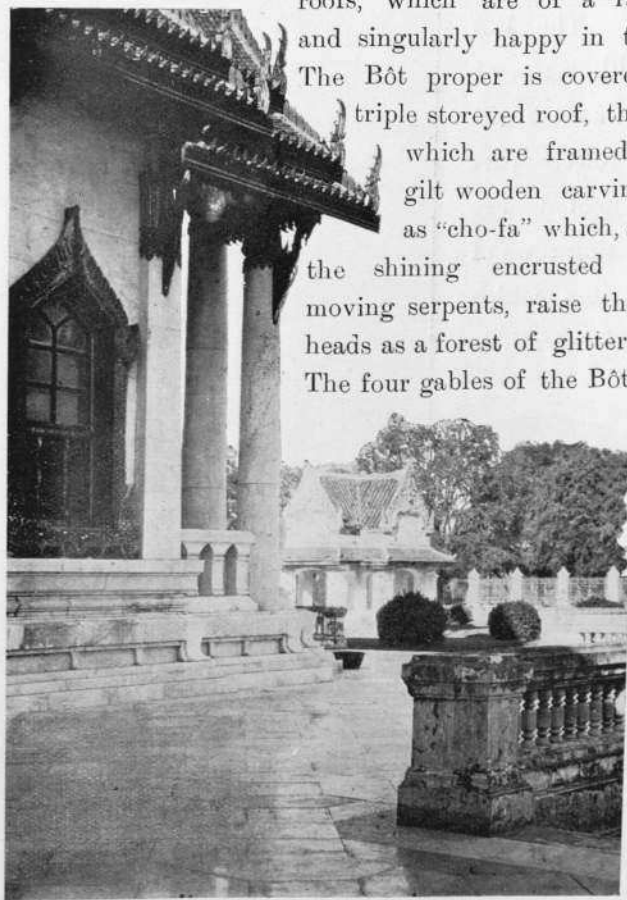


Image of Buddha
in the back-ground of the Bôt.



Statues of Buddha in the gallery,
Wat Benchamabopitr.

The main entrance is, as already mentioned, to the east, being preceded by a kind of porch borne by four round marble columns terminating in lotus flower shaped capitals. One of the most striking features of this temple is its

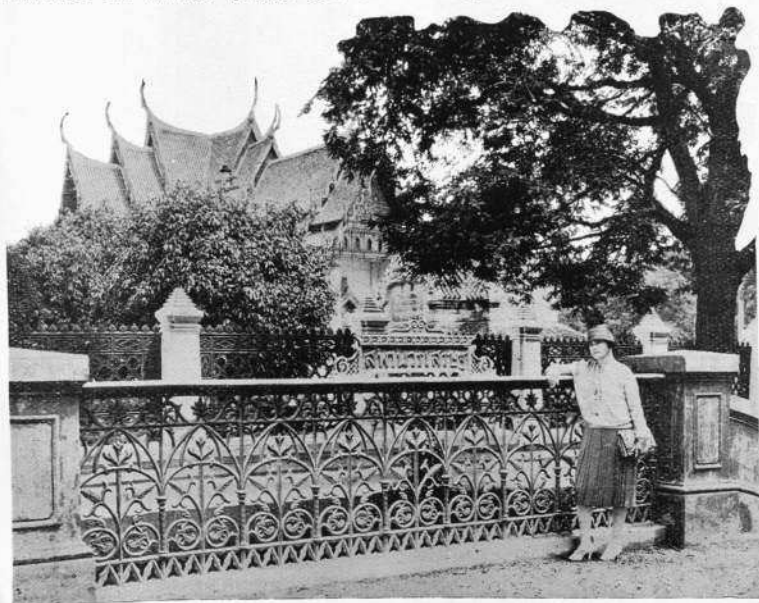


The Terrace surrounding the Bôt.

roofs, which are of a rare beauty and singularly happy in their effect. The Bôt proper is covered with a triple storeyed roof, the edges of which are framed with the gilt wooden carvings known as "cho-fa" which, shaped like the shining encrusted bodies of moving serpents, raise their horned heads as a forest of glittering spires. The four gables of the Bôt are finely

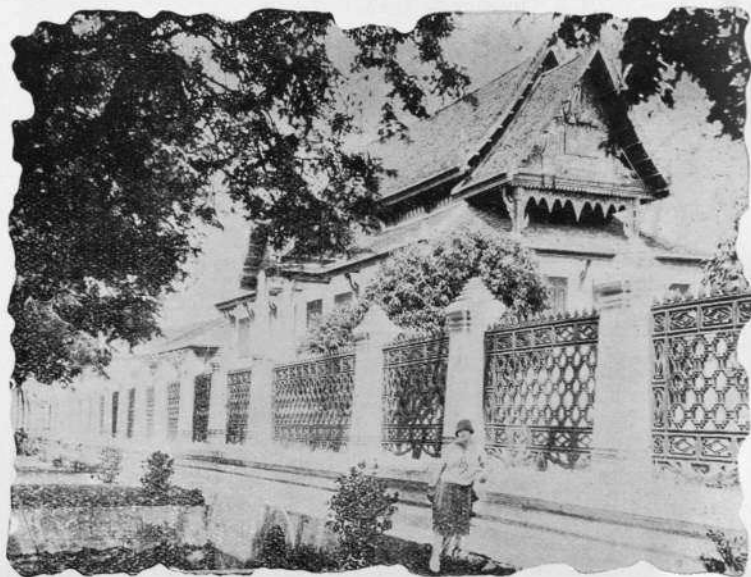
carved and inlaid, and here is seen on the eastern gable a figure of Vishnu mounted on the Garuda; on the

northern, that of a three-headed elephant; on the western the sign of the "unalom", this, as the three-headed elephant, being one of the Buddhist symbols; and finally on the southern gable is the symbol of "Dharmachakr", the wheel of the law. The galleries are closed to the exterior, the walls here being provided with rows of so called "false windows" resembling those seen in the old Cambodian temples. On the interior side, facing the courtyard, the galleries are open and here is sheltered, in the low vaulted corridors, a grand collection of statues. The galleries are covered with the same kind of roofs as that of the Bôt, and the visitor will especially admire the ingenious and beautiful manner in which these are linked up at the corners. The



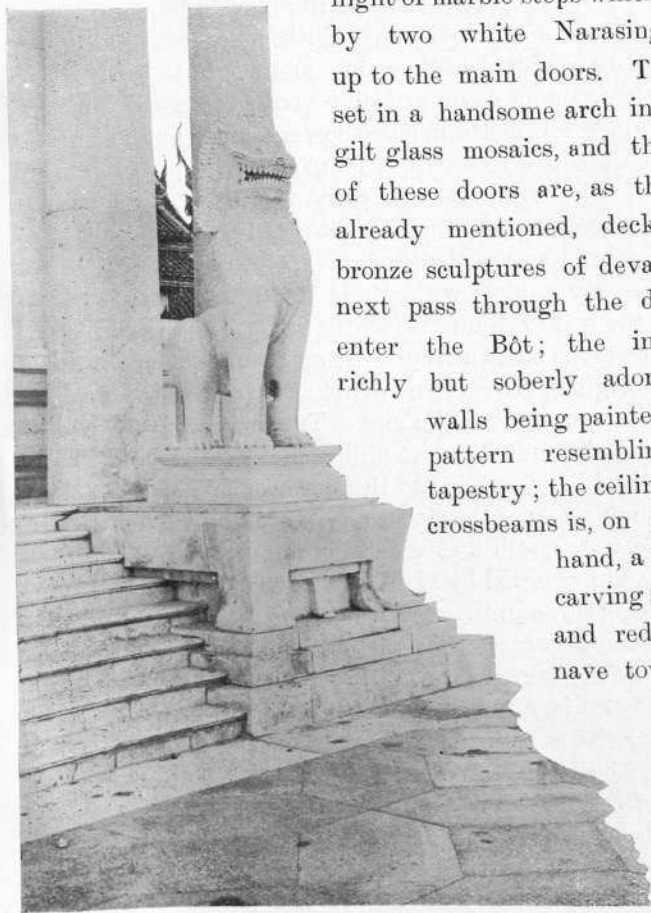
Wat Benchamabopitr seen from outside.

roofs which, on the interior side, go low down are triple, their eaves being trimmed with rows of angels or devatas on triangular shaped pieces of burnt and glazed clay. The three faces of the galleries are broken by doors preceded by porches, and at each of the corners are also pairs of doors, the panels of all these doors being covered with beautiful bronze reliefs representing devatas or demons. In niches on the exterior side of the galleries are placed a number of ancient and somewhat mutilated statues of the Buddha which bear unmistakable marks of Indian craftsmanship. These stone images originate from some grand temple in the ancient town of Lopburi, where, perhaps



Wat Benchamabopit seen from outside.

already during the 6th century A. D., there existed a powerful and highly civilized Indian settlement. Having seen the exterior of the galleries, we return to the Bôt and ascend the



Steps leading up to the Bôt, guarded by
a marble Narasingh.

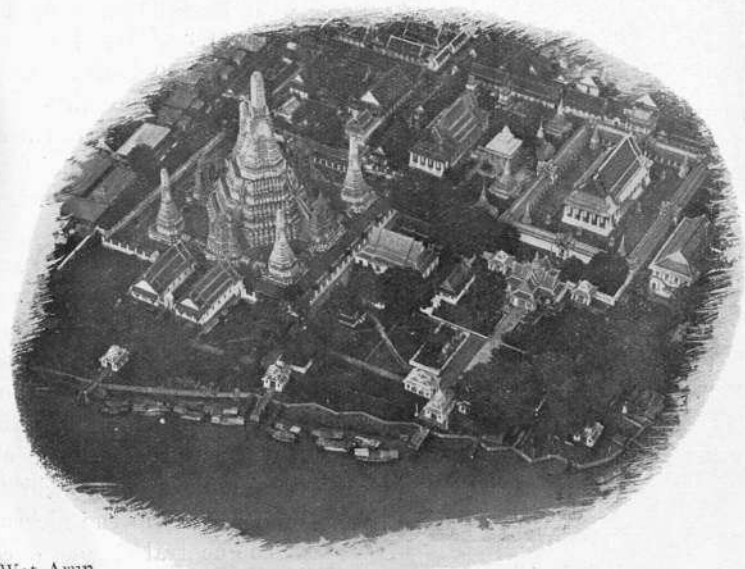
flight of marble steps which, flanked by two white Narasingh, lead up to the main doors. These are set in a handsome arch inlaid with gilt glass mosaics, and the panels of these doors are, as the others already mentioned, decked with bronze sculptures of devatas. We next pass through the doors and enter the Bôt; the interior is richly but soberly adorned, the walls being painted with a pattern resembling gilt tapestry; the ceiling with its crossbeams is, on the other hand, a marvel of carving set in gold and red. In the nave towards the west is placed a big gilt sitting image of the Buddha, which is

a fine copy of the famous Phra Buddha Jinaraj * in Pitsanulok. Notice also the low and beautifully carved preaching chair, as well as the four gilt Karen drums standing in the corners. From the Bôt, we continue our wandering through the galleries that on three sides face the marble paved courtyard. These galleries are also paved with flags of marble, their ceilings being executed in the same manner as that in the Bôt, while their drooping eaves are supported by a row of low marble columns which terminate in lotus-flower-shaped and gilt capitals. Placed against the walls is a long succession of remarkable statues of the Buddha either in a sitting or a standing posture. There are fifty-one altogether of these statues which are all cast in bronze. Many of the statues are executed in the Cambodian style and with their mukutas or crowns they resemble the god Vishnu rather than the Lord Buddha. Of special interest is a statue representing Buddha after his 40 days fast; the original, which is no doubt of Greek workmanship, is now in the museum at Lahore. The two images of walking Buddha are also uncommon, while some of the other statues represent Buddha according to the Burmese or Japanese style of art. Though many of the statues have been brought hither from towns up-country, still a considerable number have been cast in Bangkok and presented by pious noblemen as gifts to the temple. When passing through the western gallery and looking across the courtyard one also sees a big gilt image of the Buddha standing in a niche in the western wall of the Bôt. The temple ground outside the Bôt is occupied by a number of buildings, such as cloisters for the monks and a big boys' school. There are also two smaller buildings for religious purposes. In front of one are a couple of fine bronze lions, while on the gable of the other is seen a stucco relief representing Buddha in his palace at Kapilavasthu bidding farewell to his fair wife and the world. It shows him now ready to flee to the jungle on his faithful charger Kandhaka, which is seen in the right corner.

* Jinaraj = the King Jina; Jina = the victorious Buddha.



On the west-bank of the Menam and on the banks of the numerous canals that intersect the "hinterland" of Dhonburi, are found a great number of beautiful and interesting temples of which, however, only a few can be mentioned here. The most important of all is Wat Chang or Arun, which signifies "the Temple of Dawn." It lies on the river bank just opposite Wat Po. On the site of the present temple stood in King Tak Sin's time an old wat which was repaired by that monarch; but the construction of the five tall "phra prang" or towers was first undertaken during the reigns



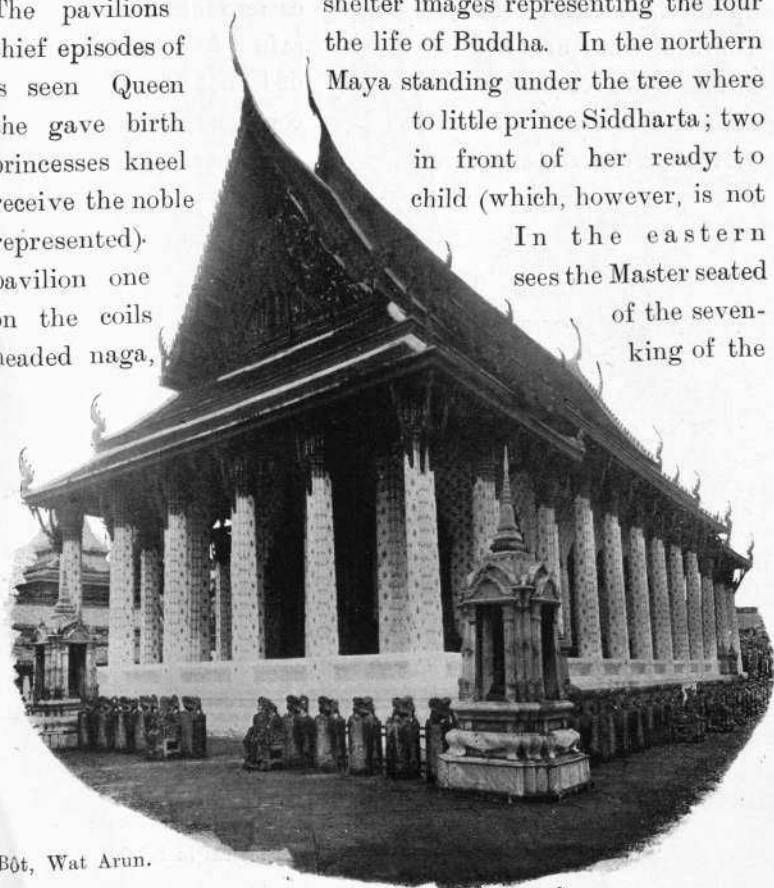
Wat Arun
from the air



Wat Arun: Interior of the Bôt.

of Rama II and Rama III. This temple, which is of quite a unique design, is one of the most conspicuous and pretty landmarks of the capital and whether seen by day in the glare of a blazing sun or by night in the light of a brilliant moon it is always of a most striking and picturesque aspect. The chief attraction is, of course, the group of the five phra prang which are built on a terrace, four of the towers standing each in its corner of the terrace, while in the centre soars up against the sky the fifth and tallest of them fully 74 metres in height. The towers rise on a series of basements consisting of rows of demons or devatas which act as atlantes. The four faces of the towers are provided with niches which, in the case of the smaller ones, contain figures of the moon god mounted on a white horse, while in the niches of the central tower, one sees the green figure of

the God Indra, King of the Gods, seated on Airavata, his three-headed elephant. These niches are preceded by small porches surmounted by small phra prang, and the summits of all five towers are crowned with the flashing trichula of the god Shiva. Stone staircases lead up to the lower terrace on which stand the four smaller prang and from this again other flights of steps lead up to the upper terrace on which rises the central prang and the four pavilions that flank the latter. The pavilions shelter images representing the four chief episodes of the life of Buddha. In the northern pavilion one sees Queen Maya standing under the tree where she gave birth to little prince Siddharta; two princesses kneel in front of her ready to receive the noble child (which, however, is not represented). In the eastern pavilion one sees the Master seated on the coils of the headed naga, of the seven-



Bôt, Wat Arun.

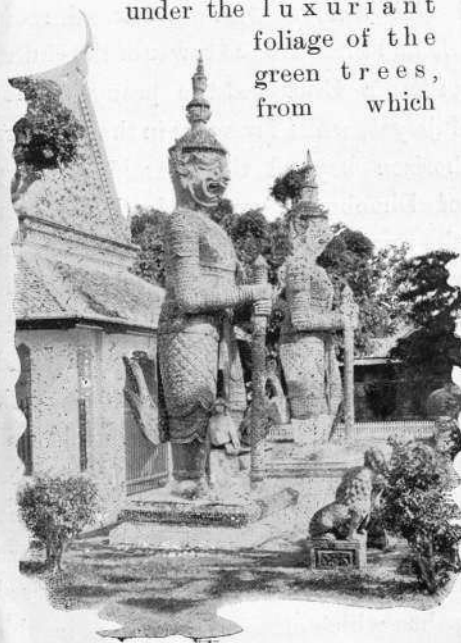
serpents, after having attained Buddhahood. In the southern pavilion Buddha is seen preaching the law to the five rishi or hermits, his first converts; and finally in the western pavilion we have Buddha entering Nirvāna surrounded by his sorrow-stricken disciples. Steep up on all four sides of of balcony. Again a up to the niche on the Tourists who are not dizziness are recommended not to make this climb. From the balcony view over the river and



The tallest prang at Wat Arun. 74 metres in height.

flights of stone steps lead, the central tower to a kind ladder of steelwire leads eastern face of the prang. safe from attacks of cony one has a very fine over most of the capital

on both sides of the Menam. Towards the east one sees the Grand Palace with its white walls and its glittering and flashing spires, among the latter the shining upper part of the golden chedi, while just opposite flash out the gilt gables of Wat Po. Behind these are seen the tall structures and coloured roofs of Wat Sudat and farther away again the tree-clad, chedi crowned mass of Pu Khao Tong, while still farther away in the horizon looms up the dome of the Throne Hall. Of the town itself not much is seen, half hidden as it is under the luxuriant foliage of the green trees, from which



A Kinarā (male)

here and there peeps out the spire of a white chedi or a red temple roof or perhaps a tall smoking chimney, the latter indicating that notwithstanding all the picturesqueness the living and toiling city is

The Guardians of the Gate, Wat Arun.



there all right. Far below the river winds its broad sheet of brownish water on which lie anchored a line of Siamese gun-boats and torpedo craft, while busy snorting tugs rush up and down the river, sometimes towing along rows of empty paddy boats heading for the rice growing districts, or full-loaded paddy boats and smaller craft are seen proceeding down by sail or by oar. Indeed the river here presents a scene of never ending commotion and life which is quite fascinating. The eye follows the great river from the bend to the north of the grand palace and down to the district of Sampeng where it disappears in a big curve towards south and west. Looking to the south one sees, near the temple, the roofs of the Hydrographical Department, then the old fort with the Royal Naval College and next the beautiful Wat Kalaya with its colossal roofs.

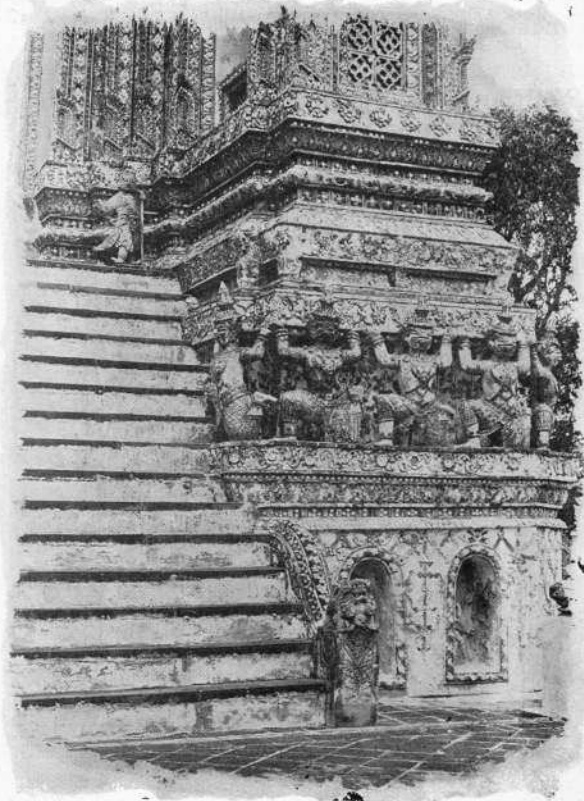


A Kinari (female)

Behind these are the tower of the church of Santa Cruz and the prang of Wat Pijaiyat, while far away in the southern horizon beyond the emerald greenery of Dhonburi's garden land are seen the rows of smoking chimneys of the rice mills and sawmills lying at the lower bend of the river in the districts of Bangkolem and Bukalo, where we find the real commercial port of Bangkok with its wharves, godowns and fleet of incoming and outgoing steamers. To the west one looks over the roofs of the vihara, the Bôt and cloister buildings of the temple, to a mass of feathered palms which close the horizon in this

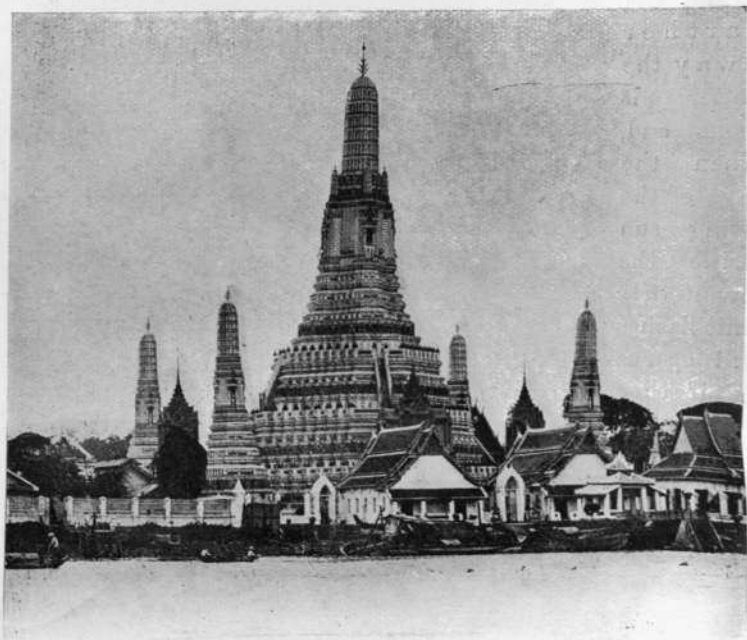
direction. Finally to the north one has the Marine Dépôt with its busy dockyard, the white prang of Wat Rakhang and the Bangkok Noi district with its railway station.

The towers of Wat Arun are built of bricks covered with plaster in which are encrusted thousands of bits of glazed tiles. Seen nearby this kind of decoration may look sordid, but when viewed from a distance the towers look as though they were carved out of a grey rock inlaid with thousands of precious stones. Certainly this pile is a triumph of decorative skill. The farther away the better it looks and, when the rays of the rising sun strike the towers, they emit flashes and sparks as if they were really encrusted with the choicest jewels. Or



Steep flights of stone-steps on four sides of the Central Tower.

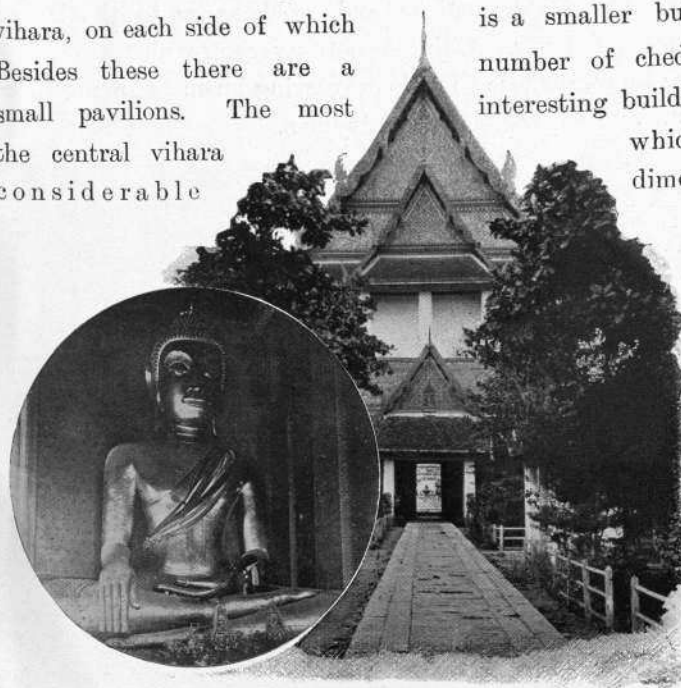
again at sunset when the fiery ball of the king of the day disappears behind the tall leafy trees which form a frame around the towers and temple buildings, then the five prang stand out against a scarlet background, a background which slowly changes its colour to rosy tints and then to mauve, until finally the black shadows of the night envelope the whole fabric. Indeed a more wonderful or impressive picture than this can hardly be imagined. Or again on the nights when the rays of a brilliant full moon stream down the silvery like pinnacles and play on the ornamentations of the towers, then you imagine that you are looking upon some fairy castle taken straight from the tales of the Arabian Nights. When most of the many beautiful impressions from this temple-city have faded one of the last to persist will be the memory of this picturesque and graceful Temple.



Wat Arun, the Porcelain Temple.



Wat Kalayanamit (Temple of the Beautiful Friend) lies, as already mentioned, to the south of Wat Arun at the mouth of Klong Bang Luang just opposite the Naval Cadet School. This fine Temple is approached from the river side by a long stone-paved walk flanked by small pavilions and tall shady trees. The walled temple enclosure contains a big central vihara, on each side of which is a smaller building. Besides these there are a number of chedi and small pavilions. The most interesting building is the central vihara which is of considerable dimensions

Big Buddha
in the Bôt, Wat Kalaya.

Wat Kalaya.

and can boast of possessing the tallest and largest roof construction to be found among the host of Bangkok temples. Its tall ridges are one of the most conspicuous land-marks of the capital and are easily discernible from the different points of the town. In the interior of the vihara is a huge brass image of Buddha which is constantly being worshipped by busy coming and going crowds of Chinese who belong to the Northern Buddhistic Church.

On certain mornings this temple may be seen filled by an eager assembly of celestials, men, women and children, who offer waxen tapers, joss-sticks and gold paper to the image of the great Teacher. Chinese soothsayers are also associated with the temple where they do a roaring business among their credulous and superstitious countrymen.



Vihara, Wat Kalaya.

Wat Pijaiyat

Among the more prominent temples the west bank may finally be mentioned. This temple stands on the bank of Klong the quarter called Ban Somdech, which hides it from view from the river. It is, quite an interesting temple and with phra prang, especially when seen by or from a distance, it resembles old Cambodian temples from the Angkor. It is easy to reach and any hired motor car can in the course of a few minutes carry the tourist from the east bank over Phra Buddha Yod Fa Bridge and along a broad and well-paved road which leads to the precincts of the temple. For people who have sufficient time on their hands this small trip is worth making. They will thereby visit one more of the many interesting wats which make up the treasures of this picturesque town, besides getting a glimpse of the interior portion of old fashioned Dhonburi.

situated on Wat Pijaiyat. San, behind

nearly however, its tall moonlight one of the region.

Prang, Wat Pijaiyat.





The manufacturing of lacquer ware.
Many beautiful and typical pieces are on exhibition in the Museum.



Lumbering in the timber region.
Many species of timber are being exhibited in the Economic Museum.



The Economic Museum is situated under the viaduct approaching Phra Buddha Yod Fa Bridge on Bangkok side. The Museum is under the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce and is devoted entirely to the exhibits of Economic Products of Siam. It is open free to the public from 10 to 17 o'clock on week-days except Wednesdays and from 11 to 17 o'clock on Sundays and holidays.

Among the products of Siam exhibited in the Museum are bamboo, basket-work, beans, bulbs, cereals, condiments, cottons, dyes, fibres, firewood, fodder, food, fruits, gums, hides, horns, ivory, lac, lacquer work, medicinal products, minerals, metal works, oils, paper, peas, pottery, rattans, resins, rice, rubber, roofing materials, scented wood, silk, spices, stimulants, tans, timber, tubers, etc.

There are many drawings, executed in water colours portraying the various agricultural products of Siam, on exhibit, and in addition to this there is a series of interesting photographs showing the different aspects of modern farming in Siam.

The Museum issues a booklet giving a summarized explanation of the sources and importance of each product.

This booklet may be obtained by the visitor from the attendant at the charge of seventy-five Stang per copy.

THE PASSENGER & INFORMATION BUREAU

**Royal State Railways of Siam.
Bangkok.**

The Passenger & Information Bureau of the Royal State Railways of Siam is a government organization having as its main object the encouragement of tourist traffic to Siam.

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Telegrams: "Railbureau, Bangkok".

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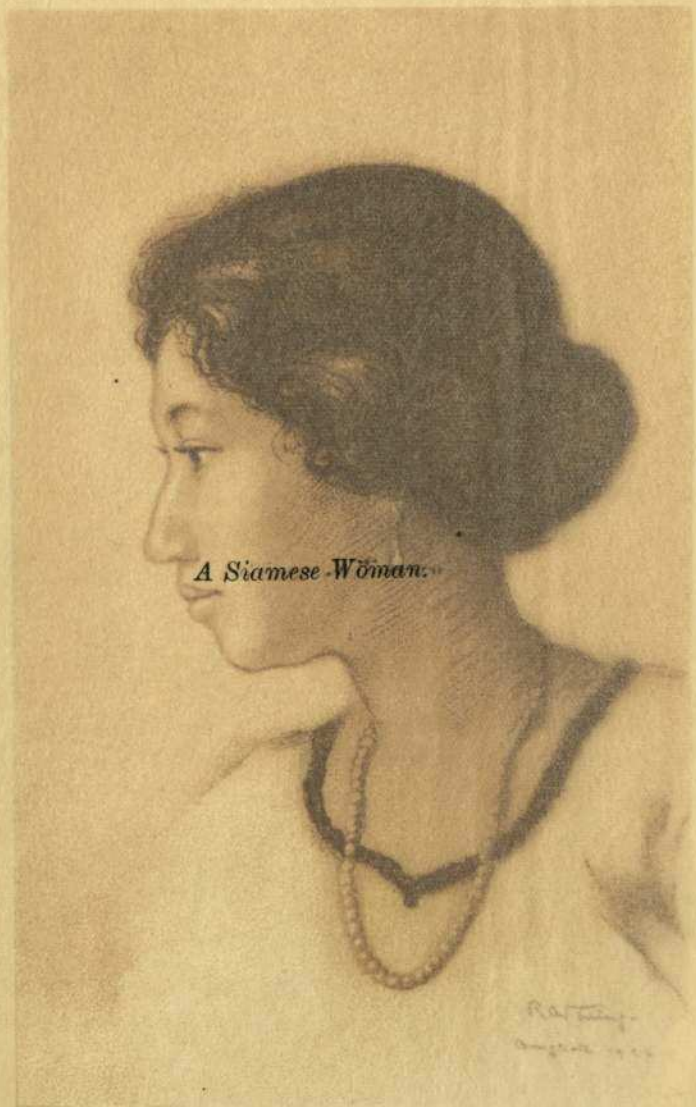


Geography and Area.

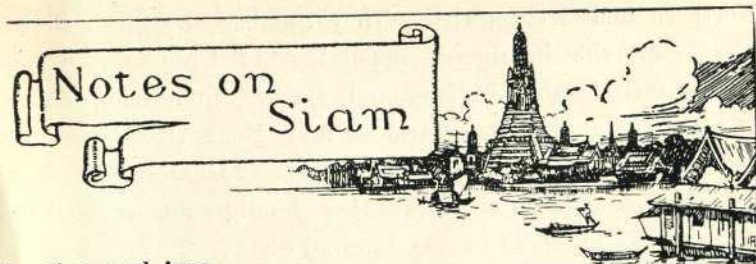
The Kingdom of Siam occupies a territory of 518,159 square kilometres or 200,295 square miles, which is about one third of what is known as the Peninsula of Further India. The other parts of this peninsula comprise French Indo-China, lying to the north, north-east, east and south-east; Burma and the Shan States to the west and north-west; and British Malaya to the south. The latter comprises the southern half of the Malay Peninsula. The greatest length of the Kingdom, from the extreme north to the extreme south, is about 1640 kilometres or 1020 miles, while the coast line reaches an approximate length of 2090 kilometres or 1300 miles. It will thus be seen that the area of Siam is greater than that of Great Britain and Ireland, and only slightly less than that of France.

Population.

Siam has a population of about eleven and a half millions, which is decidedly small for such an area (the American and European population totals about 1900 of which about 1300 are in Bangkok). Central Siam or the Menam delta is the most densely populated. The great majority of the inhabitants are Siamese, in which term are included the Lao or the



A Siamese Woman.



Frontiers and Area.

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Northern and Eastern Thai. They number about $8\frac{1}{2}$ millions. Next come the immigrant population of Chinese (450,000) and a considerable Indians and Malays, numbering almost 108,000. Cambodians, Burmese and Mons (mostly coming from Southern Burma) number perhaps 125,000 in all. There are, too, Annamite and Javanese immigrants as well as considerable numbers of the kindred Shans. Finally mention must be made of the various hill-tribes in the north. With regard to population Siam, therefore, offers a most interesting picture with the varied features and gaudy dresses of the many peoples and tribes.

The Country.

Siam may be divided into five main divisions, viz:—Northern, Central, North-Eastern, South-Eastern and Southern Siam.

1. Northern Siam is a great teak-growing area and consists of a series of roughly parallel mountain ranges extending north and south, separated by broad open valleys. The mountain ranges have a height above the plain of 600 to 900 metres, isolated peaks rising higher as for instance Doi Intanon, which attains a height of 2575 metres or 8448 feet, and is Siam's highest mountain. Outside the broader and well cultivated valleys or plateaux it is a country of deep gulleys with rushing and foaming torrents during the rainy season and of wild and lofty mountains with fine forests. This part of the country is drained by four tributaries of the Menam Chao Phya, which are, from west to east, the Me Ping, Me Wang, Me Yom and Me Nan, whose waters finally meet and blend at Paknampo, and there give birth to the Menam Chao Phya proper. The main population is Lao Yuan or Northern Thai,

but scattered on the hills live many tribes, highly interesting by reason of their quaint customs and picturesque dresses. The cities of this division are in succession from west to east: Chiengmai, on the Me Ping, the Northern capital of Siam, a pretty town of temples among fine surroundings, at the foot of the imposing Doi Sudeb; Nakon Lampang, on the Me Wang; Muang Prae on the Me Yom; and Nakon Nan on the Me Nan, all of them being old historical cities of considerable interest.

2. Central Siam, though the least picturesque, is by far the most important and prosperous part of the country and is the home of the Siamese proper. It is one of the finest rice-growing regions in the world, a flat alluvial plain, not much raised above sea level, inundated and drained, by the magnificent Menam Chao Phya and other smaller rivers, all flowing south into the Gulf of Siam. The great plain stretching north from the gulf is flanked on the west by the high mountains on the frontier of Burma, which rise to heights from 800 to 2000 metres, and on the east by the mountain masses which bar the way to the vast north-eastern plateau of Korat, while finally to the north the huge plain is limited by the foothills of Northern Siam.

The principal cities in this portion are Bangkok, the present capital; Ayudhya, the former capital; Nakon Patom with its gigantic chedi; Rajburi and Petchaburi. These last three all lie to the west of the capital, while Ayudhya is just 72 kilometres to the north of Bangkok. Other important towns, lying roughly in a line from south to north and above Ayudhya, are Lopburi, once a capital long before Ayudhya or Bangkok came into existence, and now famous for its fine ruins; Nakon

Sawan (Paknampo) at the confluence of the rivers Me Ping and Me Nan, an important floating emporium; Pitsanuloke, also a former capital; and finally the old cities of Sukhotai and Sawankaloke, now mere heaps of imposing ruins, but once splendid twin-capitals of the first independent Thai Empire in the Menam Valley. Not far south of Paknampo at the town of Chainād the Menam Chao Phya splits up into two branches, an eastern and a western. On the banks of the eastern branch lies the above mentioned old capital Lopburi, and on the western are several important towns such as Muang Singh, Muang Phrom and Angthong. The two branches of the Menam reunite at Ayudhya, just below the old city, and from there flow southwards as one river, passing Bangkok, into the Gulf some 24 kilometres south of the capital. From the map it will be seen that from the upper part of the western branch of the Menam, a third river, called the Menam Supan, branches off. This river runs almost southward for a considerable distance, passing through the Circle * of Nakon Chaisri and flows into the sea about 35 kilometres to the west of Paknam, the outlet of its mother-stream. On the bank of this stream stands one of the former capitals of Southern Siam by the name of Supanburi. Besides the big streams mentioned here, the central and southern part of the Menam valley are intersected with a broad net-work of canals, or, as they are called in Siam, 'klongs,' which together with the bigger watercourses drain and fertilize the surrounding country and at the same time serve as a means of communication, there being practically no roads, but only railways, in this part of the country. The

population in the lower part of the Menam valley are a true river people, they are as familiar with life on board a boat, as with that in a house on firm and dry land. The western portion of Central Siam is drained by a broad stream called the Meklong. Born in the wilds of the jungle-clad Tenasserim Hills on the border of the Kingdom, it runs through the upper part of the Rajburi Circle and drains in its lower course "the Garden of Siam," thereafter flowing into the north-western corner of the Gulf.

The south-eastern part of Central Siam is drained by the Bangpakong river, which has its sources far away to the south-east in the hills of Chandaburi. This stream describes a big curve during its westward course through the extraordinarily fertile rice-producing Circle of Prachin until it flows into the Gulf at a point some 40 kilometres to the east of the mouth of Chao Phya river.

3. North-Eastern Siam is a large plateau slightly tilted to the east, contained partly in a circle of mountains and limited to the north and east by the great river Mekhong, mightiest river of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. This plateau is mainly drained by the river Mūn and its tributaries, whose waters all run to the Mekhong. Born far away to the north in the snowy wastes of Thibet on the very roof of the world, the Mekhong ranks as the eighth among the great rivers of the Earth. From Korat, where the height is about 190 metres, this plateau slopes gently down towards its eastern extremity at Ubol, which is only about 100 metres above sea level. For the greater part this country is flat and monotonous, very arid during the dry season, while during the rainy season big tracts are inundated,

* The Kingdom is divided into ten Circles or divisions. (Royal Gazette No. 48, Feb. 21, 1932).

as for instance the huge and mostly uncultivated plain stretching along the left bank of the Mun River which is then turned into one huge lake. By far the greater portion of the plateau is, however, covered with immense forests, the valuable rosewood being found here. The hills in the south and west are clothed in virgin forest, the largest and most famous of these forests being the ill-famed Dong Phya Fai, which is now crossed by the railways. In the north-eastern portion are found several big fresh-water lakes, the biggest to be met with in Siam with the exception of the half-brackish, inland sea at Singora.

The population of North-Eastern Siam is mainly Lao or Eastern Thai, Siamese (in Korat) and Cambodians. Towns of importance are Korat or Nakon Rajasima, an old fortified city, lying in the western part of the plateau, and Ubol situated on the Mun River and Nong Khai on the bank of the Mekhong, nearly due north of Korat, a flourishing place of commerce doing a considerable trade with the French Lao. Scattered over a big part of this north-eastern plateau lie hundreds of ruins of ancient stone temples and of towns which, during the time of the Cambodian ascendancy, must have been large and prosperous; one of the largest and finest of them being that of Pimai which lies to the north-east of and not far from Korat. Among products of special interest coming from this portion of the country are silk, sticklac, hides and rosewood.

4. South-Eastern Siam is occupied by the Province of Chandaburi, a picturesque country of forest-clad hills with many beautiful coast views and green jungle-clad islands. Hot springs and fine waterfalls are met with to the north of the town of Chandaburi. The province is also famous for its

coffee and pepper, and lastly for the fine rubies and sapphires found there. The population consists of Siamese, Chinese, Cambodians and many Christian Annamites.

5. Southern Siam occupies more than one half of the Malay Peninsula south of Petchaburi. It possesses a coastline both on the Bay of Bengal north of the Straits of Malacca and on the Gulf of Siam. It is a territory abounding in minerals. Owing to the conformation of the peninsula with its long ridge of mountains and narrow belt of country sloping to the sea, most of the rivers are small and without importance, with the exception of the broad and deep, crocodile-infested Menam Luang, which flows into the Gulf of Siam at the town of Bandon.

Worth noticing, as already mentioned, is the big brackish inland sea called Thalé Sap, with outlets to the Gulf. The highest mountain in this division is Khao Luang near Nakon Sridharmaraj; separated from the main range, it rises to the height of 1786 metres. Another physical feature of this portion of the country is to be noted in the many isolated limestone peaks that rise abruptly from the plain. These limestone rocks are often honeycombed with small or large caves in which are ancient images of the Buddha.

The inhabitants are chiefly Siamese and Malays, the last named occupying the whole of the Province of Pattani. There is also a big Chinese population, especially in the Island of Junk Ceylon or Puket, as in other places on the West Coast, where they have come to work in the rich tin mines found there. Finally are found the interesting remains of what may once have been the original population of Further India, the

Negrito-like Semang, who are found in Pattani and at Patalung not far from the great inland sea. The chief city is Nakorn Sridharmaraj, known to history as Ligor, with its large and much venerated Stupa, lying to the north of the above mentioned inland sea. Other towns of interest are Singora, founded by Chinese pirates, Pattani once the capital of a succession of Malay Queens, and Puket the mining town par excellence.

CLIMATE.

The climate of Siam and especially of the lower Menam plain compares favourably with that of any other country lying in the same latitude and of the same elevation and may, with the exception of certain swampy or hilly, jungle-clad parts, be termed comparatively healthful. There are three distinct seasons in Central, Northern and Eastern Siam, namely the hot season extending from March to April, the rainy season from May to October and the winter season from November to February. The second corresponds approximately with the south-west monsoon, coming from the Indian Ocean, and the last with the north-east monsoon blowing from the China Sea. When the north-east monsoon is blowing strongly the temperature falls very perceptibly. The average daily variation in Northern Siam during the months of November to February is from 12°C or 53°F to 27°C or 80°F and the minimum temperature recorded is 5°C or 41°F . The lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Bangkok vary from 17°C or 62°F in December to over 35°C or 96°F in March with a mean temperature of about 28°C . Southern Siam, the country south of Chumphon being narrow and bounded by the sea on both sides,

this part of the country, the hot season from February to September and the rainy season from October to January. Bangkok must be called a comparatively healthful town, especially now that it has been provided with an excellent water supply. The municipal water of this town is, according to chemical analysis, the purest to be found in the whole of Asia; cases of cholera and plague do occur, but are neither very frequent nor numerous. Even malaria is somewhat rare, and the rate of mortality is only 29.5 per thousand, which compares very favourably with that of Singapore or Rangoon, not to mention many towns in India.

FLORA AND FAUNA OF SIAM.

The flora of Siam is pronouncedly tropical, though this somewhat escapes the traveller who traverses the vast and mostly treeless lower Menam plain. But as soon as villages are approached, groves of plumaged bamboos, swaying cocoanut-palms, the straight trunks of the borassus or sugar palms with their tufts of fan-shaped leaves and the slender graceful betel palms come at once into view. The tropical vegetation of Central Siam is, however, seen to best advantage during river trips. The banks of the Menam, and other rivers and canals are clothed with an ever verdant vegetation of palms and bamboos. Here, for example, is seen the attap palm which, seemingly without a trunk, grows straight up out of the mud. The leaves of this tree are used for thatching the roofs of the peasant houses throughout central and lower Siam. Here also in the southern part of the Menam valley lie extensive fruit gardens, miles and miles of them. Such gardens are more particularly to be found in the district of Dhonburi on the right bank of the

Menam, just opposite Bangkok, and in the wonderful garden land round the lower course of the Meklong River, called "the Garden of Siam"; these provide Bangkok's teeming population with an endless variety of strange and savoury fruits. We shall name only a few of the best known of such fruits—the cocoanut with its refreshing milk and white flesh, the jelly-like fruit of the sugar palm, a hundred varieties of bananas from the big "kluei hom" (sweet smelling banana) to the small and sweet "kluei khai" or egg banana, many excellent kinds of mangoes, the exquisite snowy-white mangosteen enclosed in its red shell, and the prickly durian with its malodorous contents which to some is the very food of heaven while to others, it is intolerable by reason of its odour. However, the advice is "have a trial". Then there are the luscious pineapple, the savoury papaya, the sweet lamut, resembling in appearance a potato, several kinds of water melons all good to taste, the hairy rambutan, the linchi, langsat, oranges including the giant pommelo, and a host of other fruits, all savoury and good to eat, like those in the garden of Eden. Indeed no other tropical country in Asia can boast of such a great variety of fruits. In Northern Siam you may, during the winter months, taste strawberries and whortleberries gathered on the hills, while walnuts are common, though mostly imported from Yunnan in Southern China.

Besides teak and rosewood which have already been mentioned, there are many other valuable woods, the giant among them being the dipterocarpus which often attains a height of over 200 feet. Redwood, sandal wood and many hardwoods abound in the immense forests which cover eastern,

western, and northern Siam as well as most of the Malay Peninsula.

Of wild palms, in Siam proper, only a few are to be found. In northern and north-eastern Siam there are also forests of real pine trees. Siam is also an ideal place for the orchid hunter, many kinds of these exquisite flowers being found in the virgin forests of this country. Siam does not excel in ground flowers, but on the other hand there is a rich variety of flowering trees. The tourist who visits Bangkok in the beginning of the rainy season will enjoy the sight of the splendid flamboyant "flame of the forest" with its canopy of flame coloured flowers or the "ton pradu" with its wealth of yellow flowers or again the wonderful bougainvillas, which clothe the walls or issue forth over the gates of the gardens of many private residences, with their multitude of scarlet flowers. Foremost of all is the queen of flowers, the sacred lotus which with its scarlet, blue or white flowers fills many a pond or ditch in the Srapratum district of Bangkok. Roses are common, too, but though they often thrive well in South Siam, they are seen to their best advantage in the North where they often adorn the dark tresses of the pretty Lao girls, Jessamine and the mysterious sweet smelling ilang-ilang with its green fleshy flowers are also common in the gardens of Bangkok.

The animal world of Siam is as rich as its flora and offers unique opportunities for the big game hunter and for the zoologist. The characteristic animal of this country is of course the elephant—though you do not meet them every day in the streets of Bangkok. In their wild state, elephants abound

in Siam outside the big plain of the Lower Menam; they are found in thousands in the forest-clad hills to the east and to the west, in the Malay Peninsula as well as in the teak-clad north. On the vast swampy plains to the north-east of Bangkok large herds of these giants also roam about, and may there be seen wandering in flocks of from 30 to 40 heads.

Among domestic animals are the huge unwieldy water buffaloes, black or pink coloured, with immense horns, which are so necessary for the labour in the paddy-fields or for drawing purposes over all the Menam valley, where they are seen either drawing the primitive wooden plough or hauling high wheeled clumsy carts; but mostly they are seen browsing in the fields or lying in the klongs or muddy pools because without a liberal supply of water these animals are absolutely useless.

Cattle are not so numerous in the Lower Menam plain as in the north-eastern and northern provinces where they are used for drawing the light roofed bullock carts or as pack animals. The Siamese pony, a small animal seldom standing more than 4 feet, is excellent for riding when travelling in the dry season, and may be seen racing in Bangkok.

Pigs, duck, geese, poultry and the so-called pariah dogs make up the remainder of the domestic animals of Siam, not to forget the genuine blue-eyed Siamese cat.

GAME.

As previously stated, the forests and jungle teem with game, large and small. Only a few hours from Bangkok in the redoubtable Dong Phya Fai you may meet tiger, leopard various tiger cats, wild boar and stags. Rhinoceroses are also found in Siam but are now extremely rare, and so is the tapir,

which can be found from time to time in the Malay Peninsula. There are many species of monkeys, among these the gibbon whose halloing cry is often heard in the forest-clad valleys of the north. Gaur are met with in many places, both in Siamese Malaya, North-Eastern Siam and the North. Good hunting grounds for big game lie to the north of Nakon Lampang and in the Dong Rek Hills to the west and south of Korat; these places also abound with peacocks, pheasants, wild fowl and a host of other game birds. There is good snipe shooting on the big swampy plains between Bangkok and Ayudhya and fishing may be indulged in in the north. In the Mekhong is to be found the biggest fresh water fish in Asia, the "pla buk". It attains sometimes a weight of over 240 kgs. In Bangkok during the cold season good fish is to be had, such as the mackerel-like "pla tu" and the "pla kapong", both salt water fish, and the "pla chon", a fresh water fish. Oysters can also be ordered at the hotels and are quite tasty.

For collectors of butterflies this country is a real paradise abounding with a great number of splendid coloured species.

GEOLOGY.

As a systematic geological survey has only just been started, the information available is scanty. Limestone is the most conspicuous rock, although it forms a relatively small part of the total geological section. There are several beds of limestone separated by many thousands of feet of sandstone and shale which are altered in many places to slate and schists. The main range forming the backbone of the Malay Peninsula and the divide between Siam and Burma consists of folded

Palaeozoic rocks not less than 50,000 feet thick. The trend of the folding is in general north-south. Tremendous bodies of granite intruded into this series and are now exposed in discontinued belts from the Federated Malay States up to Muang Fang in the north. This folded series of rocks were very deeply eroded and finally a period of subsidence followed and permitted the sea to occupy what is now the valley of the Menam almost up to Utaradit and all but the upper parts of the Malay Peninsula. Since that time the Menam has been actively filling in these submerged valleys and Central Siam is in consequence one huge alluvial delta through which occasional high hills of the ancient surface still protrude. Some relatively recent volcanic activity has taken place. Hot springs are present in many places both in Northern and Southern Siam; near Lampang is a basaltic lava flow. Various evidences go to show that a distinct raising of the Menam valley is taking place and this action together with the large annual deposit from the rivers is gradually raising the level of the country higher and higher above mean sea level.

MINERALS.

At present the only mineral wealth which has been developed to any extent is tin, which is worked in the three southernmost provinces, especially on the west coast of the Phuket province. The annual output in 1927-28 was 7813 tons valued at Baht 21,598,437.50.

Gold in small quantities is worked by the local inhabitants in many parts of the country, which formerly, according to tradition, was much richer in this metal than is now the case. Bigger enterprises undertaken with foreign capital have hitherto proved a failure.

HISTORY.

The history of the Siamese nation begins with the foundation of the Kingdom of Sukhodai (a ruined city on the upper Menam Yom, one of the rivers forming the Menam Chao Phya). What is now Siamese territory was, in remote times, inhabited by Lawa and other savage tribes belonging most probably to the Mon-Khmer family, (The Mon were the original inhabitants and masters of Lower Burma until finally, during the 19th century, they were crushed and nearly absorbed by the victorious Burmese; the Khmer are closely related to the Mon). In the early centuries of the Christian Era the Menam valley was colonised by Indian immigrants who brought the Brahmanic, and perhaps at the same time the Buddhist religion, Indian customs and arts with them. These Indian colonists subjugated and civilized the original inhabitants, the Lawa and kindred tribes, building a number of cities such as Lopburi, the oldest Ayudhya (Dvaravati), Rajaburi, Chandaburi, and others. (Strictly speaking the Lawa are not the original inhabitants. The aborigines were negritos, some of whom are still found existing in the jungles of the Malay Peninsula, those however living in Siam proper must have been absorbed or exterminated by the Lawa long before the Indian settlers arrived). Later on Siam was conquered partly by the Mon, under whose sway fell northern and western Siam, partly by the Khmer, who made of the eastern basin of Menam a province of their powerful empire; while the Malay Peninsula came under the suzerainty of the Emperor of Sri Vijaya (Palambang in Sumatra). All these countries had also in their turn been colonised and civilized by immigrants from Southern India and had adapted Indian

civilization and religions. The wonderful ruins of Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Burūbudur in Java still bear witness to the powerful Indian influence in this part of Asia. The Thai (the name by which the Siamese call themselves) were, perhaps already, several centuries before the commencement of the Christian Era, masters in the Yangtze valley and peopled large tracts of the Southern Chinese provinces (that is the provinces of Yunnan, Sze-Chuan, Kwei Chao, Kwangsi and Kwangtung where between seven and eight million Thai still remain living), where in the time of Charlemagne they had founded the powerful empire of Nān-Chao. However, harassed and pressed by the conquering Chinese coming from the Hoang Ho basin they immigrated by and by into the fertile plains watered by the Menam and Mekhong, but it was not until the middle of the 13th century that they rose to independence. In the north, Mengrai, a descendant of the princes of Chieng Sen drove the Mon from Lampun and founded the city of Chiengmai at the end of the 13th century. His contemporary and friend Rama Khambeng, whose father Indraditya had waged a successful war of independence against the Khmer and established his dynasty at Sukhōdai, conquered the whole Menam valley and the Malay Peninsula as far down as Ligor (Nakon Sridharmaraj). This first national hero still lives in the memory of the Siamese under the name of Phra Ruang, and his deeds are recorded on a well preserved stone, which visitors can see in Bangkok where it is kept in the National Library. "The Dynasty which reigned during a part of the 13th and the first half of the 14th century at Sukhōdai and the twin capital of Sri Sajjanalaya — that is Sawankaloke on

the upper Menam Yom—is the first historical Siamese Dynasty. It has a double claim to this title, both because its cradle was precisely in the country designated by foreigners as Siam and because it is this dynasty which, by freeing the Thai principalities from the Cambodian yoke and by gradually extending its conquests as far as the Malay Peninsula, paved the way for the formation of the Kingdom of Siam properly so called. Its rôle in the history of Indo-Chinese arts and institutions is not less important than its political rôle; inheriting as it did the succession of the Khmer Kingdom, which sank in part beneath the blows it administered, it transmitted to the Siam of Ayudhya a good number of Cambodian art forms and institutions which still exist in the Siam of to-day." *

After one century's brilliance Sukhōdai was eclipsed by a new dynasty, whose founder, Phra Chao U-Dong or Rama Dhibodi, a former Prince of U-Dong (near Supanburi to the N. W. of Ayudhya), established in 1350 A.D. his capital at Ayudhya, which was destined to become the capital of Siam for the next 417 years. Rama Dhibodi warred successfully against Cambodia and during his reign and those of the nearest of his successors Siam's frontiers were extended towards the east, and the Thai and the vanquished Khmer in the Menam valley were welded into one homogenous nation. Inside the narrow limits of a guide book it is impossible to record all the Kings who reigned in Ayudhya, only a few of the most famous will therefore be mentioned here. Among these are:—

*G. Cœdès, Origins of the Sukhodai dynasty, in the journal of the Siam Society (Volume XIV).

Phra Paramatrailokanart (1448 - 1488 A.D.), who extended the kingdom in the north and built the famous temple called Wat Srisarnbejr (pronounced Sisanpet).

Phra Naresvara Maharaja (1590 - 1605 A.D.), Siam's second great national hero. He liberated the country from the Burmese, who during the previous reign had invaded it. He gave Siam the most extensive limits it had ever reached.

Phra Chao Prasād Dong (1630 - 1655 A.D.), who founded a new dynasty under which foreigners, particularly the Europeans, began to trade with Siam. The first Christian missionaries had already entered the country during the preceding century.

In the reign of Phra Narayana Maharaja (1658 - 1688 A.D.) fell one of the most thrilling and romantic epochs in the history of Siam. This liberal and far-seeing monarch took into his service a gifted Greek adventurer by name of Constantin Faulcon, who speedily won the confidence and favour of his master to such an extent that he was raised to Prime Minister and made Chao Phya Vijayen. This man induced the king to enter into diplomatic relations with France and to exchange embassies with Louis XIV the "Roi Soleil" at Versailles. One of the best descriptions of Siam of that day was in fact written by La Loubère, himself an ambassador. French missionaries were allowed to settle in Siam and to preach unhampered the Christian doctrines. French military engineers built a citadel and palaces for the king at his favourite resort, Lopburi, where the ruins of these palaces are still seen to-day, as well as of Faulcon's water pipes and fountains. Faulcon, however, went into the French king's scheme of converting Siam and its king to Christianity with such zeal that he awoke the illwill and

anger of the noblemen and the Buddhist clergy, the result being a revolution which broke out in 1688 and cost him his life, his master dying shortly afterwards. After that time the country was almost closed to foreigners.

We now come to the reign of the last King of Ayudhya during which this splendid city of temples and huge gilded images of the Buddha finally met its doom. In the year 1763 the Burmese, having crushed the last Mon dynasty, invaded Siam with a huge army and invested Ayudhya. The siege lasted for more than three years but finally, in spite of the heroic resistance on the part of the Siamese, the town fell in April 1767. The King fled and died in the swamps to the south-east of Ayudhya, while the Burmese with Hunnish cruelty utterly destroyed the rich and beautiful city, not even sparing the sacred images of the Buddha or His magnificent temples. So fell Ayudhya "the incomparable", never again to rise and become the capital of Siam.

But soon a liberator appeared in the person of a man of Chinese origin, under the name of Phra Chao Tak Sin, who proclaimed himself King of Siam, gathered the remnants of the Siamese army together and succeeded in driving the Burmese away. He established his capital at Dhonburi, on the western bank of the Menam opposite the present Bangkok. Phra Chao Tak Sin proved himself a very able statesman and a brave and undaunted soldier but he was finally seized by religious madness. He was succeeded in 1782 by one of his generals, Chao Phya Chakri, who on his return from a victorious campaign in Cambodia proclaimed himself King afterwards to be known under the name of Phra Buddha Yod Fa Chulalok, now styled

Rama I. This King founded the present Chakri Dynasty—which has given to the country a succession of extraordinarily capable and intelligent rulers—and he also transferred the capital to the eastern side of the Menam, on the actual site of Bangkok.

Rama I (1782-1809) restored to Siam her ancient frontiers and several times drove back the Burmese invaders, Siam's hereditary foes, over the frontier. He built the Royal Palace, the Wat Phra Keo and Wat Phra Jetubon (popularly known as Wat Po). He was succeeded by his son Phra Buddha Loes La Nabhalai or Rama II (1809-1829), who constructed Wat Arun (commonly called Wat Chang) and Wat Sudat.

Phra Nang Klao or Rama III (1824-1851), a son of Rama II, warred successfully against the rebellious Lāo State of Viengchandr in North-Eastern Siam and during many years with Annam; he restored the temples and buildings begun under his predecessors. During his reign modern Siamese art and poetry reached its climax.

Rama III was succeeded by his brother Phra Chom Klao (Maha Mongkut) or Rama IV (1851-1868). This King proved himself one of Siam's most remarkable rulers. Prior to his accession to the throne he had been a Buddhist monk for 27 years during which time he amassed a huge fund of various knowledge. Besides being a learned man deeply versed in religious knowledge and the Pali language, he taught himself Latin and English, mathematics and astronomy. As soon as he took over the reins of government he commenced to open up the country for foreign trade and influence, and during his reign relations with foreign

countries were definitely regulated by treaties, while a start was made in bringing the administration into accord with the needs of the time.

MODERN SIAM.

Rama IV was succeeded by his son Phra Chula Chom Klao (Chulalongkorn) or Rama V (1868-1910), during whose reign Siam was brought into line with modern civilized states. In every department of the administration the old feudal system was gradually done away with and new organization developed on sound lines. Debt slavery was slowly abolished, the king's rule was extended over the territory of the chiefs of the provinces, the worst defects of the judicial system were remedied and an efficient administration was extended over the whole Kingdom; a fixed system of official salaries was introduced and the finances of the country placed on a firm basis, the system of taxation was greatly improved and the farming out of taxes done away with. Posts and Telegraph services were organized in 1885, and railway construction commenced in 1891. Both services to-day function satisfactorily, especially the railway service. The Army and Navy were modernised, national service being introduced and an excellent force of Gendarmerie, which has contributed greatly to the efficiency of the Civil Administration, was established. The policy of gradually abolishing public gambling was adopted and of controlling and reducing the consumption of opium. The biggest crisis of this period occurred when Siamese aspirations of uniting the Thai populations living to the east and north-east of the Mekong with the Thai of the Kingdom clashed with French Colonial

expansion, resulting in a collision between Siamese and French forces and the blockade of Bangkok in 1893. Siam lost all her possessions on the left bank of the Mekhong and it was not until 1905 that the last detachment of French troops evacuated Chantabun and the so-called neutral zone of 25 kilometres on the right, that is, the Siamese bank of the Mekhong, was done away with. The next important Treaty with France was concluded in 1907 when Siam ceded to her the Cambodian Provinces where the wonderful ruins of Angkor Wat and Nakon Thom are situated, while by the Treaty of 1909 the suzerainty over the Malay States of Trengganu, Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis was transferred from Siam to Great Britain. But Siam also reaped benefits from these Treaties which greatly modified the system of extra-territoriality and by bringing the various Asiatic subjects under Siamese Law removed what in this case had amounted to a serious danger. King Chulalongkorn visited the Straits Settlements and Java several times, India once, and Europe twice (1897 and 1907). He died in 1910 lamented as Siam's greatest reformer and as the true father of his people.

The late Sovereign, Phra Mongkut Klao (Maha Vajiravudh) or Rama VI succeeded his father on the 23rd October 1910. The coronation, in December 1911, brought together a bigger gathering of European Royal Representatives than have ever before met in Asia. The aim of the new reign was to consolidate and develop what had been accomplished during the previous 40 years, and to lead the nation wisely towards the fulfillment of its aspirations for a fuller sense of nationalism. One may note the establishment of the "Wild Tiger" Corps (a body of scouts mainly made up of volunteers

from the various Civil Services) and the Boy Scout movement, to strengthen the idea of the duty of national service; the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the financial state of the country, the establishment of a National Savings Bank, the decision to proceed with a scheme of irrigation of the lower Menam valley, the introduction of family names, the steady advance being made towards the furtherance of the national system of education, the Decree abolishing public gambling and the closing of the last gambling house in Bangkok as well as the Royal encouragement given to football and other kinds of sports, the Laws relating to compulsory vaccination and protection against contagious diseases being not the smallest of these strides towards progress and the welfare of the Nation. On the 22nd July, 1917, Siam declared War on Germany and Austria-Hungary. Early in 1918 a Military Mission under Major-General Phya Bijai Janariddhi (Bhaad Devahastin na Ayudhia) left for Europe to act in liaison with the Allies on the Western Front, the Siamese Expeditionary Force being despatched in June. Though this small force did not take part in the actual fighting as a body, many of its individual members nevertheless got an opportunity of distinguishing themselves during various actions. In the same year the through railway service to Penang was opened and the Red Cross Society was re-organized.

From the foregoing it will be seen that during the last generation Siam has made greater progress than most of the other Asiatic Nations. With Public Education now enforced in most provinces, this progress will be felt more and more and will ultimately raise the whole nation to a higher plane worthy of its glorious past and great traditions.

Phra Mongkut Klao (Rama VI) died on Nov. 26th, 1925, and was succeeded by His Majesty King Prajadhipok (Phra Pok Klao), the present King.

* "What His Majesty, King Prajadhipok, has accomplished since November 1925, is such as to well merit the nation's confidence in him. Immediately upon ascending the throne, he created a Supreme Council of State consisting of five members, all respected Princes of judgment and experience. As they advise him upon important matters of State, there is thus added to his progressive outlook the weight of this Council's experience. By this initial act he did much to gain the confidence of his Kingdom.

"He next created a Legislative or Privy Council of forty men, 'Persons of Siamese nationality who by their ability and high character are deemed worthy of His Majesty's confidence.' This was a move toward decentralization, for, although the members are appointed by the King and consider such matters as His Majesty presents to them, they yet have the power to name the Council president, and any five members may petition the president to bring to His Majesty's attention any matter of State they think requires his consideration. To this body the King made the forward-looking statement, "Our predominating desire is to experiment in and cultivate the art of debating as practiced in large assemblies, so that whenever the time is ripe for a change in the method of Government, it will then be an easy matter to effect such a change.

"His Majesty is likewise interested in the problem of Local Government, and has sent a commission abroad into

* Extracted from an article by Kenneth E. Wells, which appeared in the June Number of the *Inter-Ocean* 1928.

neighbouring countries to study the Local Self-Government systems there.

"The first major problem to which His Majesty addressed himself was the balancing of the budget. For four years there had been a deficit. This deficit was quickly wiped out, and a surplus achieved, not by the usual method of increasing the taxes but by cutting down on expenditures. He began with a drastic cut in the expenses of the Royal household and continued through the various departments of State. The compulsory retirement of some six thousand persons was effected, and departments consolidated and reorganized so that despite the cut there was no loss of efficiency. The result was that the budget surplus the second year of his reign more than doubled that of the first despite increased expenditures along various useful lines.

"During the present reign Treaties have been completed with other countries which abolished the last vestiges of extraterritoriality. This has allowed Siam to make further revisions in her tariff Laws, a low import tax now being a considerable source of revenue. Delegates have been sent to take part in the various conferences of the League of Nations. New opium Laws have been enacted in compliance with the provisions of the Opium Convention. These Laws have been inaugurated at a considerable cost in revenue to the Government but result in an increased control of the traffic. Opium smoking is done under surveillance, in licensed shops, and the dross is turned back to the Government and destroyed. In the control of this traffic Siam has attained an enviable record in the Far East.

"Under the present ruler the Laws are fast being codified and put into operation. A Press Law has been put into effect, designed to curb the danger from irresponsible utterances of cheap newspapers. Laws dealing with immigration and the traffic in women have been passed during the brief period of this reign, and Laws on civil service, on family registration, and trade-marks and copyrights are on the point of being enacted.

"Nor is this all that has been accomplished in the space of two and one-half years. Internal improvements have taken place along manifold lines. Geographies are wont to limit Siam's mode of transportation to the bullock cart. Yet on January 1, 1927, King Prajadhipok formally opened the 442 metre steel bridge across the wide Menam River, thus linking up a railroad system, north and south, of some of three thousand kilometres. During the present period both railroad and motor road construction has been pushed forward. Agriculture has been aided by means of irrigation works and by the improvement of the quality of rice grown. This latter is significant inasmuch as four-fifths of Siam's exports consists of rice. The promotion of agriculture is under the direct supervision of one of the ten departments of State. To further promote the prosperity of the country, co-operative credit societies have been formed under the aegis of the Government to increase the working capital of the farmers and to free them from bondage to private usurers.

"A portion of the mail is now carried by aeroplane, and as a further aid to communication, Siam has recently become linked up with the wireless telegraphic and news services of the World.

"King Prajadhipok is greatly interested in education. The educational system is steadily being extended and perfected along the lines of both elementary and university work. His Majesty, besides employing the services of a number of European and American educators, has despatched a commission to make a comparative study of existing educational systems in neighbouring countries.

"The Red Cross Society is under the patronage of the King. Through this and other agencies he has greatly aided the work among lepers, the demented, and other needy classes. His interest in the youth of the kingdom is evinced by the Boy Scout Jambouree, held in Bangkok early in 1928. Here were gathered boys from the remote coners of the country for sports, drills, exhibitions and contests." *

GOVERNMENT.

Siam was an absolute monarchy, and the Executive Power was exercised by the King advised by a Supreme Council of five and a Cabinet of Ministers. The "Coup d'Etat" of the 24th June 1932 has given to the Country a Constitutional monarchy and abolished the Supreme Council. There are altogether seven Ministries, viz: Foreign Affairs, Interior, Defence, Public Instruction, Agriculture and Commerce, Justice, and Finance. The Kingdom, outside the capital, is, as already stated, divided into 10 Circles or Mondhols: those in Central Siam being Ayudhya, Rajburi and Pitsanuloke; in the North, Bayap; in the North-East, Nakon Rajasima and Udorn; in the South-East, Prachinburi; and in the South, Nakon Sridhamaraj and Puket. These circles are governed by Tesās or Lord-Lieutenants. The Circles are again divided into "Changvads" or Provinces, each with a

*Extracted from an article by Kenneth E. Wells, which appeared in the June Number of the Inter-Ocean 1928.

governor. A "Changvad" is made up of several ambhurs or districts, the heads of which are the "Nai Ambhurs." An "ambhur" is finally subdivided into "tambuns" or communes, each of which is again made up of a number of "mubhan" or villages. The village with its chosen Headman is thus the lowest unit in the social structure of Siam. Bangkok is governed by a Lord Prefect, and the Metropolitan Circle is divided into five changvad of which the most important are Phra Nakara (See plan of Greater Bangkok) or the capital proper, Dhonburi, which lies opposite Bangkok, and Samudaprakar or Paknām, the last being situated at the very mouth of the river Menam. In a considerable number of provincial towns there have now been established Municipal Boards, whose members are in part elected by the population. In the North where formerly half independent princes or chaos ruled there are now executive councils. The Provincial Administration as well as that of the Capital is directly under the control of the Minister of Interior; the internal order and the policing being maintained by the Metropolitan Police of about 4000 officers and ranks, and in the provinces by the Provincial Gendarmerie, numbering about 8000 officers and men. The last corps has sometimes, by reason of its excellent discipline, smart military appearance and conscientious work, been compared with such "corps d'élite" as the Philippine Constabulary and the Imperial Military Police of India. The Department of Forests has achieved a most notable feat in saving the teak forests from destruction and making them one of the Kingdom's most valuable assets. The Irrigation Department has already done much important and useful work by digging

canals, building locks and water reservoirs in the southern part of the Menam Valley and is at present engaged in the execution of a vast irrigation scheme which ultimately will embrace the whole of the Menam Valley making the agriculture in this part of the country entirely independent of the capricious rainfall and thereby making it one of the world's most prodigiously fertile lands.

During the last few years Public Education has made great progress and compulsory school attendance for children of both sexes is being extended little by little to all the provinces, an encouraging sign being the considerable contributions made by local voluntary effort.

There is a University in Bangkok and several excellent schools with quite a modern standard of training, the results of which are seen in the extraordinarily large number of English speaking persons met with among the educated classes. Medical science and training is also well cared for, there being several big hospitals in Bangkok among them the grand institution of the Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital. Siam also possesses an up-to-date Pasteur Institute, two Leper Asylums and a most efficient and well organised National Red Cross Society.

The Forces of the National Defence consist of an army and a navy recruited by volunteers and conscripts, there being universal liability to service throughout the Kingdom; the conscripts serve two years with the colours. The army is divided into divisions, grouped into army corps. There is a cadet school in Bangkok besides other special training schools for the different arms. A

considerable number of the officers have received their training in Europe. The army consists of infantry, cavalry, field artillery, engineers, an army service corps, a medical corps and a flying corps.

The Navy is small but adapted to the needs of the country.

The upper part of the harbour is reserved as anchorage for the vessels of the Royal Navy, and visitors when making trips on the river may here see most of the Siamese men-of-war lying at anchor. The Marine Depot with its dry dock and workshops lies on the western bank of the river, just opposite the Grand Palace.

FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMERCE.

The National Budget. Siam's budget for 2472 (1929-30) balanced at just over a hundred million Baht. The following are the chief items of revenue (figures in million of Baht):—

	Baht
Customs	20.74
Excise	10.46
Land Revenue	10.30
Capitation Tax	9.68
Railways (nett receipts)	10.21
Mining Royalties	3.12
Forests	5.07

The chief items of the expenditure are:—

Civil Administration	39.18
Defence (Army, Navy and Air Service)	21.17
Service of Debt	9.40
Civil List	6.26
Pensions	3.51
Roads	4.58

Figures on National Budgets are taken from the Statistical Year Book of Siam.

The budget also provides for about Baht 7 millions of capital expenditure (financed from revenue) on Railways, Irrigation, etc.

The National Debt. The Government has from time to time raised five foreign loans, aggregating £13,630,000, to each of which a sinking fund is attached, the amount already repaid being £1,300,000. These loans were raised for productive purposes, mainly Railways and Irrigation construction. The Railways already pay more than the interest on the capital spent on them.

Currency. The currency of the country is mainly paper, the gross circulation of notes at the end of 2472 (31st March 1930) being about Baht 130 millions. The currency and exchange system is that known as the "Gold Exchange Standard" and under it the exchange value of Baht is kept at Baht 11.00 to the pound sterling.

Resources. The chief product of Siam is Rice, the amount of land now under rice cultivation being about 18 million rai, or $7\frac{1}{10}$ million acres. The yield in 2472 for the whole kingdom was 64,580,570 piculs, or 4,306,263 tons. The other principal products are Tin, Rubber, Teak and other Woods, Cattle, Swine, Fish, Sugar, Sticklac, Pepper, Tobacco, Cocoanuts, Cotton and Kapok.

Exports. The total value of all Exports from Siam in 2472 was Baht 219,772,893, so that, as will be seen from the above figures, Rice accounted for practically 63.29%. After Rice came Tin and Tin Ore with 10.30%. Then followed Teak with 5.10% and Swine, Salt fish and Sticklac.

Imports. The total value of Imports into Siam in the year 2472 was Baht 206,713,078. In this total Cotton Manufactures

Foodstuffs, Raw Materials, Metal Manufactures, Gunny Bags, Tobacco, Yarn and Machinery are accounted for.

Industries. There are many rice and saw-mills in Siam, a single cement factory, a few soap factories, some ice works and a couple of docks with big repair shops, but there are no other important industries, the country being essentially an agricultural one.

Customs Tariff. A new Customs and Excise Tariff came into force on March 27th, 1927, by which the general rate of duty was raised from 3% to 5% ad valorem, and certain special articles were singled out for rather heavier duties; but the tariff remains a purely revenue one.

RAILWAYS.

Railway construction in Siam did not begin until 1891. Two years later the first line, a private one, was opened connecting Paknam with Bangkok, a distance of 20 kilometres. Realising that railways are important for the development of the country, the Siamese Government made special financial arrangements for their construction and, within thirty years, the railways in Siam have grown from nothing to 3184 kms. (B. E. 2472-A. D. 1929/30), out of which more than 2862 kms. have already been opened to traffic, while the remainder are under construction and survey.

Most of the railway lines in Siam are owned and operated by the State, for out of the total kilometerage given above only 106 kms. are owned by private capital. Even then they are subject to State Control in regard to public safety, etc.

The Royal State Railways of Siam is the biggest commercial undertaking in the Kingdom to-day with a capital of more than £18,000,000, and an annual turnover of approximately £1,900,000. The System is in continuous expansion and enjoys the admiration of and is very popular with the travelling public.

The main terminal and the headquarters of the Royal State Railways of Siam are in Bangkok from where the lines radiate to the Southern, Northern, North-Eastern and Eastern Provinces.

The total length of the **SOUTHERN LINE** is more than 1,300 kms. The main line, running straight from Bangkok to Padang Besar, the Frontier Station, covers a distance of 989 kms. At Tung Song Junction, 773.11 kms. from Bangkok, the line branches off to Kantang, a sea port on the west coast 93 kms. away, and a little farther down at Kao Choom Tong, kms. 797, there is another branch line 35 kms. long to Nakon Sritamaraj. Haad Yai an important junction is farther south at 944 kms. From here the Pattani line of 215 kms. starts to Sungei Golok. Singora, on the east coast is also connected with this junction by a branch line of about 30 kms. in length.

Express trains equipped with the most up-to-date day and night coaches, single and double berths compartments and restaurant cars, run twice a week between Bangkok and Penang. The Royal State Railways of Siam take much pride in these express services and do their utmost to make travelling between Penang

and Bangkok pleasant and comfortable. At present, the journey which occupies only 26 hours appeals strongly to most travellers between Penang and Bangkok, especially to those who dread travelling by steamers during the monsoon season.

On the Southern Line the Royal State Railways maintain an excellent hotel at Hua Hin-on-Sea and five rest-houses at Petchaburi, Chumphon, Haad Yai, Tung Song, and Singora. Hua Hin is 229 kms. from Bangkok and is an incomparable seaside resort in the East. The hotel is kept up to the best standard desired by the most critical mind. In conjunction with the hotel, the Railways also maintain golf links which are also second to none East of Suez. Bangkok residents as well as those of the Federated Malay States frequent it all the year round.

Rest-houses are intended especially for travellers who are not in a hurry and wish to stop off at various places along the line. They are nicely kept up, clean and always provide good food. Tourists will find it convenient as well as pleasant to stop off a day or two and experience this mode of travelling.

THE NORTHERN LINE of the Royal State Railways connects Bangkok with Chiangmai, the capital of the North. The main stretch between the two cities covers some 751 kms. At Ban Dara junction 458 kms. from Bangkok, a line branches off to Sawankaloke, 28 kms., the ancient capital of Siam, famous for its historical relics and ruins of centuries ago.

There are express trains with excellent day and night coaches, single and double berth compartments and restaurant cars running between Bangkok and Chiangmai. The journey occupies only 26 hours, and the time table is so arranged that daytime is spent in the most interesting part of the country.

The scenery along the Northern Line is incomparable in its grandeur. The Khun Tal Tunnel, at kms. 683, is 1,361 metres long, and is considered to be one of the most important engineering works of the system.

Rest-houses are maintained by the Royal State Railways at Lampang and Chiangmai. Good accommodation and excellent food can be obtained at both places. Many of the tourists visiting Chiangmai and Lampang find it convenient to make their headquarters there.

Among places of interest along the Northern Line Ayudhya, the former capital, Bang Pa-In, His Majesty's summer residence, and Lopburi, another ancient capital, must be mentioned. These places can be visited within a day from Bangkok. The Northern Line also serves as the most important means of transportation for the rich Menam delta from where the most essential part of Siam's commerce, rice, is derived.

THE NORTH-EASTERN LINE of the Royal State Railways runs from Bangkok to Varindr (Ubol), passing through a mountainous and jungle clad part of the country. The scenery along this line is extremely interesting as the railway track is continuously winding in and out of the mountains. Between Bangkok and Korat, 264 kms., a train is operated daily, and besides there are a considerable number of local and goods trains.

This line has now its terminus at Varindr (Ubol), a distance of 575 kilometres from Bangkok. Ubol is a town situated near the French border and on the north-eastern plateau of Siam, rich and fertile.

At Korat, 264 kms. from Bangkok, a line branches off to Khon Kaen, 187 kms. The line is opened to traffic up to

Bua Yai, 81 kms., and the section between this place and Khon Kaen is under construction.

Khon Kaen is a town situated on the same plateau as Ubol and half way between Korat and Vientiane or Wieng Chan of the French Laos. The country surrounding Khon Kaen is very rich and fertile.

A newly built Rest-house is situated near by the Railway Station of Korat and is intended for travellers who have to break their journey at this place.

THE EASTERN LINE runs from Bangkok in an easterly direction to Aranya Prades, 255 kms., on the Cambodian frontier, which for the present is the terminus of a first class motor road to the world famous ruins of Angkor Wat, and via Phnom Penh, to Saigon, the Capital of French Indo-China. Later on rail connection is contemplated and the trip from Penang or Singapore to Saigon by rail with a few days spent in Bangkok and the North of Siam will be one of the most interesting tours of the world.

RELIGION.

A very large majority of the population of Siam are Buddhists, confessing that special form of Buddhism which is called Hinayana, the Southern or Pali Buddhism, which is still the dominating religion in Ceylon, Burma and Cambodia. It is now commonly admitted that this form of Buddhism is the purest and most catholic form, and comes nearest to the original teachings of the Great Sage from Kapilavasthu. The other form of Buddhism called Māhāyana, which prevails in Annam, China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia and Thibet, has in Siam adherents only among the immigrant Chinese and Annamites.

Besides Buddhism there are other religions to be found in Siam. Thus, for instance, the Province of Pattani is wholly peopled by Mohammedan Malays, also in Bangkok and Ayudhya there exist big Mohammedan communities, Malay and Indian. Most of the immigrant Chinese are Ancestor Worshippers or Confucianists but the "luk-chin," or cross between Chinese and Siamese, always become adherents of their mothers' religion. Christianity was first preached in this country in the 16th century by Portuguese missionaries and later on by French, a fact already alluded to in the historical section of this guide. The Roman Catholic Christians are mainly found in Bangkok and Lower Siam as well as in the eastern parts of the Kingdom; they number altogether about forty thousand. This mission has built several fine churches, among these the stately Cathedral in Bangkok, and has done deserving work in its excellent schools. The Protestant Mission, mainly represented by the American Presbyterian Missionary Society, first entered this country in the beginning of last century; it has to its credit the introduction of the Printing Press and of vaccination against small pox; most of the Protestant Christians are to be found in Northern Siam, chiefly at Chiangmai and Lampang. They number about 20,000. The American Presbyterian Mission Society deserves much praise for its unselfish medical work among the sick and the poor. Fine hospitals have been built both in the North and in the Malay Peninsula and the first Leper Asylum at Chiangmai owes its existence to the gifts of the noble American Christians, a fact which will not be forgotten by the Siamese Nation.

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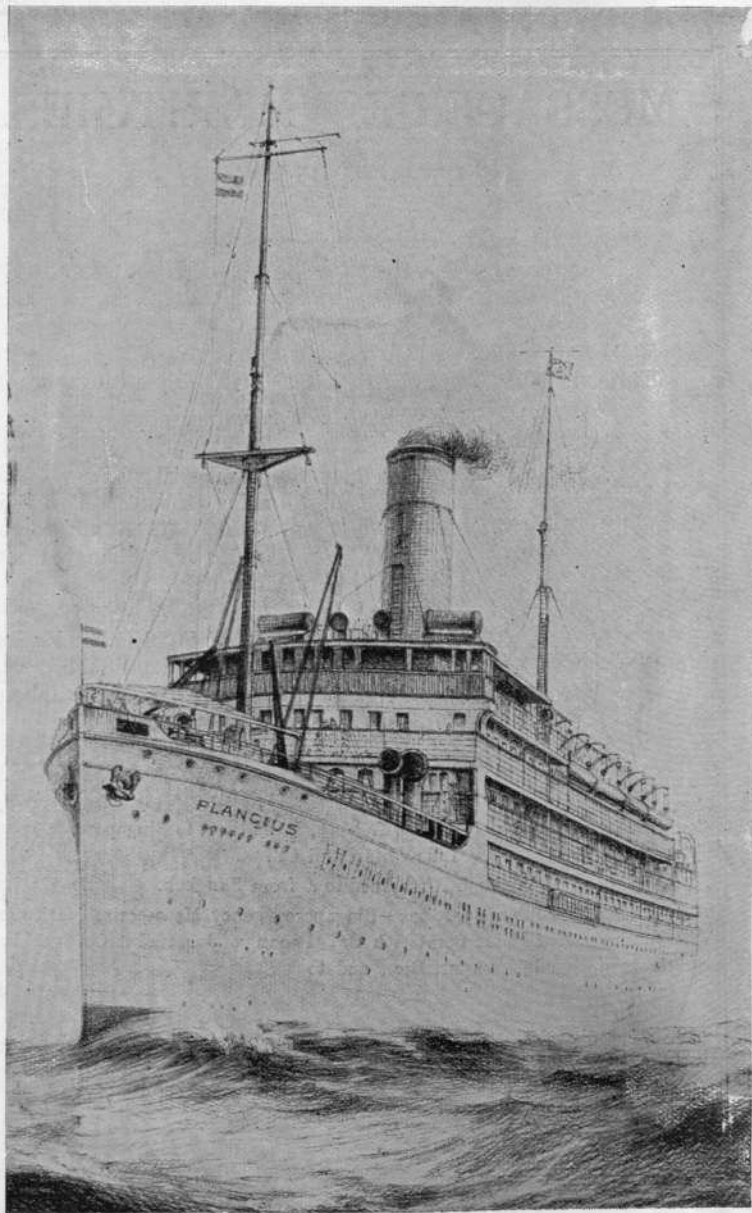
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